



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

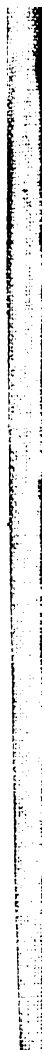
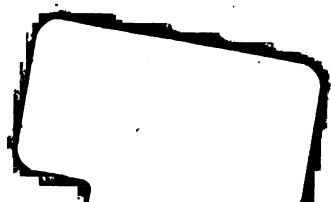
### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

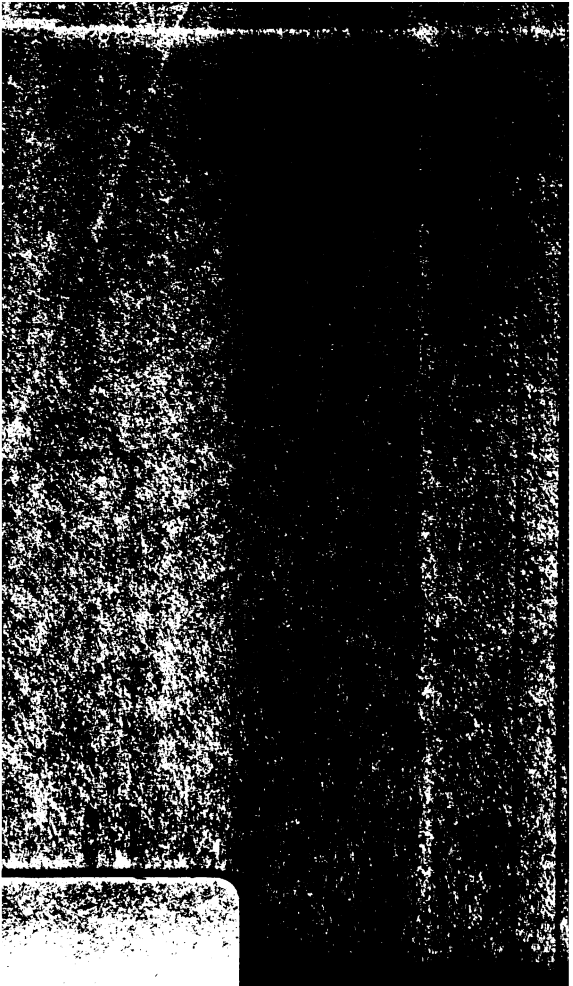
NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07488061 2



Martineau  
NCLW



Martinez  
NCW









*Miss Garrison*

ILLUSTRATIONS  
OF  
POLITICAL ECONOMY.

---

NO. XVII.  
THE LOOM AND THE LUGGER.

PART I.

A TALE.

---

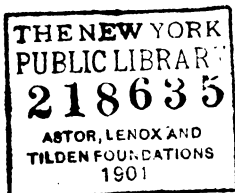
. BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.

STEREOTYPE EDITION.

BOSTON:

LEONARD C. ROWLEY.

1838.



NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

## CONTENTS.

---

### CHAPTER I.

Taking an Order - - - - - 5

### CHAPTER II.

Giving an Order - - - - - 25

### CHAPTER III.

Dumb Duty - - - - - 37

### CHAPTER IV.

An Afternoon Trip - - - - - 61

### CHAPTER V.

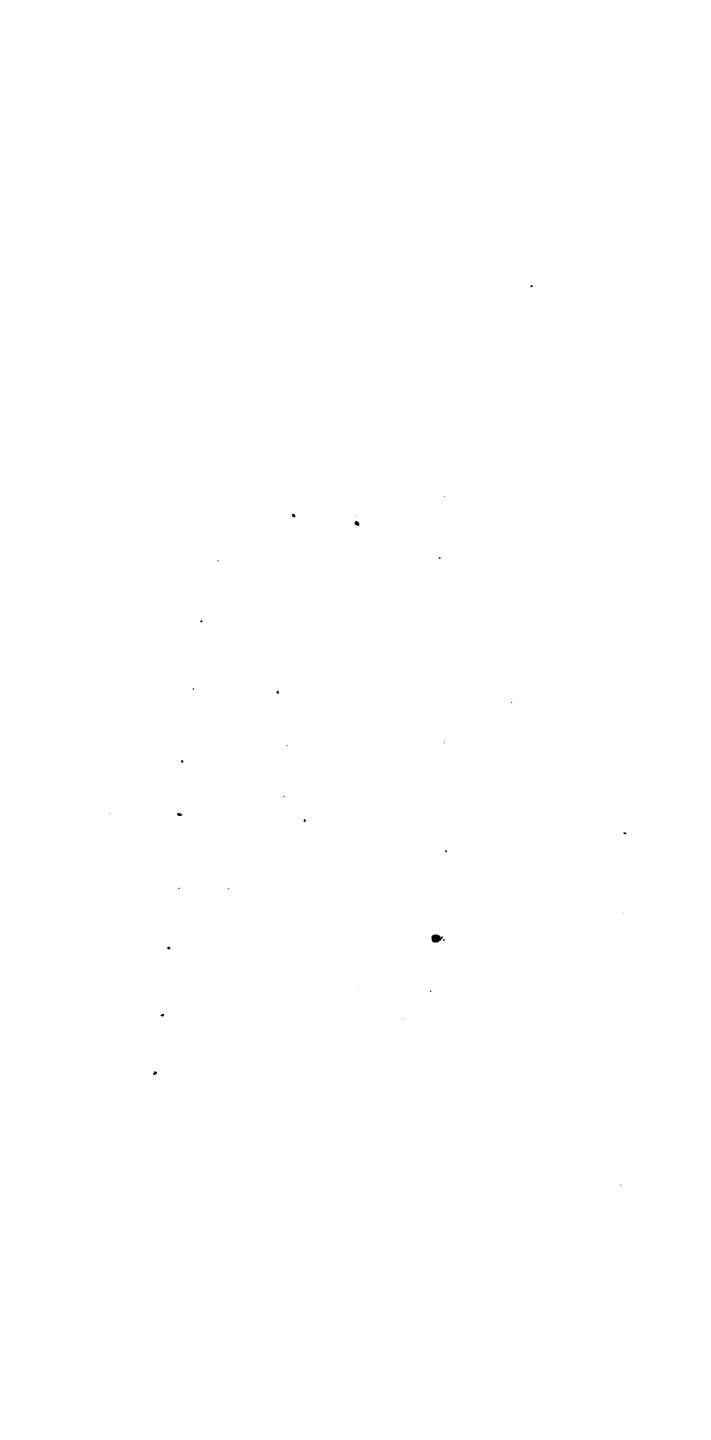
Morning Walk - - - - - 84

### CHAPTER VI.

A Night Watch - - - - - 121

### CHAPTER VII.

Hear the News - - - - - 148



**THE**  
**LOOM AND THE LUGGER.**

**PART I.**

---

**CHAPTER I.**

**TAKING AN ORDER.**

**MR. CULVER**, the silk manufacturer, arrived at home later than the usual dinner hour, one dark winter day. He had been attending a meeting at the Mansion-house, held on the behalf of the Spitalfields weavers, whose deplorable distress in the middle of the season caused fearful anticipations of what their condition might be before a warmer season and a brisker state of trade should arrive. Mr. Culver's thoughts were occupied, during his slow and sad walk from the Mansion-house to his abode in the neighborhood of Devonshire-square, by doubts whether a time of activity would ever arrive ; or, if it did, how long it would last. Year after year, since he had entered business, had he been flattered with hopes that permanent prosperity would come ; that the ladies of England would continue to

prize silk fabrics as the most beautiful material for dress; and would grow conscientious enough to refuse smuggled goods, when every conceivable variety could be had from the looms of their own country. These had been Mr. Culver's hopes till of late. Now he began almost to despair, and to acknowledge himself tired out by the alternate perverseness of customers and workmen. As soon as a new fashion was fairly established, and orders abounded, there was sure to follow a strike among the men for wages; they invariably urging that a protected manufacture must be able to yield good wages to the operatives employed in it. As soon as their demands were yielded to, and the price of goods therefore enhanced, the market was deluged with smuggled silks; and while traffic was busy in the shops, the manufacturer was left to sigh over his ruinous stock when the fashion of the season had passed away. Being thus the sport, as he said, of three parties,—the encroaching weavers, the capricious public, and the smuggling shop-keepers,—the manufacturer declared that he stood no chance of prosperity, however ready the taxed millions of his countrymen might be to tell him that they were made to suffer that

he might flourish, and that he had no right to complain while so many paid for the protection granted to his manufacture. Mr. Culver found it difficult to be grateful for the vaunted protection which did him no good ; and was strongly disposed to resign the favour and his business together. He wished he had done it ten years before, when he might have withdrawn from the manufacture a richer man than now. At present, all the manufactures of the kingdom were in so depressed a state that there was little encouragement to invest his remaining capital in any other concern ; and it would, if unemployed, barely suffice for the maintenance of his family—his motherless young family—whose interests depended on himself alone. His chief doubt about leaving off business immediately arose from something that he had heard at the Mansion-house this day, in confirmation of rumours previously afloat,—that it was the intention of government to introduce some important changes into the silk-trade,—to authorize a restricted importation of foreign silks. The rumour had created a prodigious outcry at the meeting, and caused such a contest between certain shopkeepers and manufacturers, such a



splitting into two parties, as made it seem probable that the interests of the starving weavers—the objects of the meeting—would be forgotten between them. Mr. Culver was one who wished for the removal of the existing prohibition, seeing and feeling as he did that nothing could be worse than the present state of the trade in England, and believing that the rage for foreign fabrics might subside when they could be easily had, and that it must be a good thing to try a new footing for a manufacture which was at present carried on to the injury of all the parties concerned. If he continued to manufacture, it would be with the hope of this change; but he ended with a doubt whether he ought to play the speculator much longer, and whether there was not something in the nature of the business which would for ever prevent its being in a permanently flourishing state.

When he approached his own house, he saw his girls looking over the blind, as if waiting for him; and, in the background, nurse's high cap, always white, as if by miracle, considering the locality.

"O, papa!" cried Charlotte, "we thought you never would have come."

"I dare say dinner will be overdone, my dear ; but never mind. If cook is not vexed, I shall not care."

"But the Bremes' foot boy has brought a note for you ; and he has called twice since for an answer ; and he was obliged to go home without one, after all."

"Such an ugly footboy, papa !" observed Lucy "Nurse says that when they set up a footboy, they might as well have got one that had not a snub nose just like his master's."

"And such a ridiculous livery, papa ! It is so odd to see such a little fellow with knee-breeches, and with buttons on his big coat as large as my doll's saucers ! Nurse says——"

"Hold your tongue, my dear. I want to read this note ; and when we go to dinner, I have something to talk to you about that signifies more than Mr. Breme's footboy's coat-buttons."

While the note was being read, nurse, who was a privileged person, did not leave the room, but muttered her wonder where the change came from that made shopkeepers now so different from what shopkeepers used to be. She remembered the time when the Bremes would no

more have thought of having a footboy than of living in the king's palace. And if shopkeepers' children learned to dance in her young days, they were satisfied with plain white frocks, instead of flaunting in silks and gauze ribbons, like the Miss Bremes. There lay the secret, however. It was of the silks that all the rest came. Every body knew that the Bremes lived by breaking the laws;—that old Breme's shop in town, and his son's at Brighton, were full of unlawful goods.

"And so they will be, nurse," said her master, "as long as the great folks at court, and all the fine ladies who imitate them, buy French goods as fast as they can be smuggled.—Charlotte, see if dinner is coming. I am in a hurry. I have to go out again directly."

"O, papa!" said Lucy, "I thought you had something very particular to tell us; and now you say you are going out directly."

"It must do when I come back to-night, or in the morning. It is nothing very entertaining; but almost anything is better worth telling than all the faults you have to find with what the Bremes say and do. How can it possibly signify to you and me whether their footboy has a snub nose or a sharp one?"

"No, but, papa, it is such a very wicked thing of Mr. Breme to smuggle half the things in his shop, when the poor weavers close by are starving, and he knows it. Nurse says——O, here is the boiled beef! but I can go on telling you while you are helping the others. Nurse says——"

"Nurse," said Mr. Culver, "it is a pity you should stay to cut the child's food. Charlotte will attend to her."

Nurse unwillingly withdrew. Perhaps she would have attempted to stand her ground, if she had known what her master was planning against her. He was at this moment thinking that he must by some means, put a stop to all this gossip about their neighbors; gossip which, in the case of the Bremes, was strongly tinged with the malice which it was once thought nurse Nicholas could not bear towards any human being. It would be difficult, he feared, to separate nurse in any degree from those whom she would always consider her charge, even if she should live to see them all grown up; but her influence must be lessened, if he did not mean the girls to grow up the greatest gossips in the neighborhood. He thought that the return of

their brothers from school in the approaching holydays (brothers both older than Charlotte, the eldest girl) would afford a good opportunity for breaking the habit of nurse being in the parlor all day long during his absence. He now began the change by sending her away before dinner, instead of immediately after.

"Old Short has been telling nurse," continued Lucy,—*"you know old Short, papa?"*

"My dear, he used to weave for me before you were born."

"Well; old Short tells nurse that there is not a loom at work in all Crispin-street, nor has been all this month, while silk pelisses are more the fashion than ever they were. The Bremes had such beautiful pelisses last Sunday at church! You saw them, papa?"

"Not I, my dear. I do not go to church to look at people's pelisses."

"O, well! they are made Paris fashion; and of French silk too. Your silks are not good enough for such high and mighty young ladies, nurse says."

"There will soon be an end of that," observed Charlotte, who attributed her father's gravity to *the fact of his manufacture being slighted.*

"There will soon be an end of all that; and nurse's son is going to help to put an end to it."

"Yes, papa," cried Lucy. "Only think! He is going into the Pretence Service."

"La, Lucy! you mean the Preventive Service," cried Charlotte.

"To *prevent* prohibited goods being brought on shore; to *prevent* smugglers' boats from landing. Now you will understand, Lucy, what the Preventive Service means. So Nicholas is to be one of the Coast Guard! I suppose nurse is pleased."

"I hardly know," replied Charlotte. "He says it is very hard service in these times; and I believe she thinks her son fit to be an admiral. He has to guard the Sussex coast; and nurse says there are more smugglers there than any where."

Lucy was of opinion that he should have somebody to help him. He could hardly manage, she thought, to prevent boats landing, if several chose to come together. He must be a very brave man indeed, she thought, to judge by what had been given him to do. No wonder nurse was proud of him! Nicholas sank much in her estimation when she heard that he was not alone

to guard the whole Sussex coast, but had companions within sight by day, and within hail by night.

"But do they all earn wages, like Nicholas?" inquired Lucy. "They pay him wages, besides letting him have his pension still, that was given him for being wounded in a battle. I wish old Short, and some of the other poor people he was telling nurse about, could be made guards too. But who pays them?"

"Who do you think pays them? Try and find out."

Charlotte thought that her father and the other manufacturers were the most likely people to pay for the prevention of smuggling, especially as some shopkeepers and the public had no objection to smuggling. But when she remembered how many guards there must be, if they were in sight of one another all along the coast where smuggling went on, she began to think that it must be an expense which would be hardly worth the manufacturers' while. Lucy supposed that if each manufacturer kept one, it might be easily managed. She asked which would cost most,—a Preventive servant or a footboy?

"You think, I suppose," said her father, "that

as the Preventive men do not prevent smuggling, after all, we might as well have a footboy, and be as grand as the Bremes. But, do you know, Lucy I think the Bremes would have much more reason to laugh at us then, than you have now for ridiculing them. I believe Mr. Breme is growing rich ; and he must know very well that I am growing poor."

Charlotte asked again about the Coast Guard. She would have been pleased just now to learn that her father had any kind of man-servant in his pay, besides those in the warehouse of whom she knew already. When, however, she was told the annual expense of keeping a guard against smugglers on the coast and at sea, she believed that the cost was beyond the means of all the manufacturers together that she had ever heard of. It was above four hundred thousand pounds a year,—a sum of which she could as little realize the idea as of so many millions.

"Yes, my dear," said her father, "four hundred thousand pounds are paid every year for *not* preventing smuggling ; for we see that smuggling still goes on."

"How can it be?" asked Lucy. "Do the men go to sleep, so that they do not see the



boats coming? Or are they lazy? or are they cowardly? I do not think there will be any more smuggling in Sussex, now that Nicholas is there."

Her father laughed, and told her it would require a much greater man than Nicholas to put a stop to smuggling in Sussex; and that if the Coast Guard could keep their eyes wide open all the twenty-four hours round, and were as active as race-horses, and as brave as lions, they could not prevent smuggling, as long as people liked French goods better than English; and that such would be people's taste as long as French goods were to be had better for the same money than any that were made in England.

Why the English should be so foolish as to make their fabrics less good and less cheap than the French, Mr. Culver could not now stay to explain. He despatched his cheese, tossed off his port, recommended the girls to learn as much as they pleased from nurse about the Preventive Service, and as little as they could about the Bremes' misdeeds, and was off, to see the very man against whom nurse's eloquent tongue had been employed.

*Mr. Breme* appeared to have something of

consequence to display to Mr. Culver, as he turned on the gas in his back-room to an unusual brightness when his friend entered. (They still called themselves friends, though provocations were daily arising in matters of business which impaired their good will, and threatened to substitute downright enmity for it in time.)

“Here, my dear sir,” said Breme; “just look—but I wish you had come by daylight:—just look at this piece of goods, and tell me if you ever manufactured anything like it.”

Mr. Culver unrolled one end of the piece of silk, ran his finger-tips over the surface, furled and unfurled its breadth, contemplated its pattern, and acknowledged that it was a very superior fabric indeed. He had hardly ever seen such an one from the Lyons looms, and he was sure neither Macclesfield nor Spitalfields had produced it.

“Can Spitalfields produce such an one, or one nearly resembling it?” asked Breme. “That is the question I wanted to ask you, my dear sir. Bring me a specimen which shall pass for French, and you shall have a larger order than has left this house for a twelvemonth past;—provided always that you can furnish it without delay.”

There need be no delay, Culver answered ; for there were more looms unemployed in Spitalfields than could be set to work by any order that a single house could give. But the inferiority of the British manufacture was the impediment ;—an inferiority which seemed almost hopeless. There was not a child of ten years old, dressing her doll in her mamma's odds and ends of silk, that could not tell French from English at a glance. Ay ; put her into a dark room, and she would know the difference by the feel.

“ You should get rid of this inferiority, my dear sir,” said Breme, with an encouraging smile, “ and then we shall be most happy to deal exclusively with you. We prefer dealing with neighbours, *cæteris paribus*, I assure you. You should get rid of this inferiority, and then——”

“ Get rid of it ! I should like to know how, while our weavers insist on the wages which they fancy can be spared from a protected trade, and will not believe that their prosperity has anything to do with the quality of their work. As long as they fancy their manufacture by law established, they will take no pains to improve it. *There is no stimulus to improvement like fair competition.*”

“ Well ! your men’s wages will soon be no longer by law established ; that will be one step gained. You will then compete with Macclesfield and Paisley, which you could not do while your Spitalfields Act was in force. Bestir yourselves, I advise you, or the foreigners will cut you out in every way.”

“ I shall bestir myself to get our protection removed,” observed Culver. “ This is our only hope : but in this endeavor you will not join me, Breme. Contraband goods have too many charms for your customers, and bring too much profit to you, to allow you to wish that the trade should be open. Beware, however, that you are not caught some day.”

Breme begged to be trusted to take care of himself. As to his fondness for a stock of contraband goods, he would just mention, in confidence, a circumstance which would prove his disposition to encourage the home manufacture.

“ When I was last in Paris,” said he, “ a manufacturer there offered to supply me with any quantity of silk goods, to be deposited in any part of London that I might point out, upon the payment of an insurance of ten per cent. This tempting offer I declined, sir.”

“Because you knew you could as easily get the goods without paying the insurance. Very meritorious, indeed, Mr. Breme!—However, I am not one to talk about the patriotism, and the loyalty, and all that, involved in the case: for I hold the frequent and unpunished breach of a law to be a sufficient proof that the law is a bad one; and that the true social duty in such transactions is to buy where things are cheapest, and sell where they are dearest; thus relieving those who want to sell, and accommodating those who wish to buy. I am not going to quarrel with you, sir, for buying your silks abroad, if you will only join hands in getting your neighbours freed for a fair competition with France.”

“Very liberal, indeed, my dear sir! Very handsome, indeed! It will give me great pleasure if you can accept the order which I have just given you a hint of. By the way, were you at the last India sale?”

“Of course.”

“How did the bandanas go?”

“You probably know as well as I. I am no exporter of bandanas.”

“Do you mean to insinuate that I am? Re-

tail dealers have something else to do, I assure you."

"O yes ;—to sell them when they come back again. But you must know how they are disposed of at the India House, and how much it costs to carry them over to Guernsey, and bring them in again, in spite of the Pretence Service (as my little girl calls it), before you can tell whether to sell them at seven or eight shillings apiece in your back shop."

"Upon my word, sir, you are very wise," said Breme, laughing.

"One learns such wisdom at a dear cost," replied Culver. "Let me see. About 1,000,000 bandanas have been sold at the India House this year, at four shillings apiece. Of these, full 800,000 come back to be sold at seven or eight shillings each ; so that the users of bandanas pay a bounty of 800,000 times three shillings a year to speculators and smugglers, besides their share of the expense of the Blockade and Coast Guard which is employed to prevent their getting their handkerchiefs. It is a beautiful system, truly !"

"Let it work quietly, till those concerned begin to see into it," replied Breme. "You

ought not to complain, you know. It is all done to protect your craft."

"If government would please to protect the consumers' money," observed Culver, "they would have more to spend on the produce of my looms. All I ask is that the people's purses may be protected, and we manufacturers left to take care of ourselves. Government has been so long killing us with kindness that I doubt whether we shall ever get over it. However, cut me a pattern of your silk, and I will consult with my cleverest workman, and let you know what we can do."

"Certainly :—that is,—I am sure I may trust your honour."

"My interest, if not my honour. You must know very well that our books are not so full of orders just now as to make us willing to throw a chance one into other hands."

"True, true! But a rival house——"

"Will not interfere with you while you agree to fair terms. I will be off to my *factotum*, as I call him, in my business matters. I hope Mrs. Breme is well, and the young ladies?"

"The children are well enough; but my wife *has not got* over the autumn fogs yet. She

would not be persuaded to leave Brighton till the royal party had removed; and the consequence is just what I expected. Her chest is so delicate that I doubt whether she will get across the doors this winter. It is really a very animated, an extremely fascinating scene, you know, when the royal household are at hand. Your young folks are flourishing, I hope?"

"Quite so. Good evening. My best respects to your lady."

"Good evening. O, Mr. Culver, just one thing more! You said something about your stock. Have you a good assortment that one might select a few pieces from,—of grave colours,—at moderate prices?"

"O yes. Will you come and see?"

"I think I will," replied Breme, looking round for his hat. "And a good many blacks?"

"Of course; but you had better view them by daylight. You are not thinking of choosing colours to-night?"

"Certainly; but I can examine your prices, and bring home a piece or two of blacks. Here, Smith! Send Johnson after me directly to Mr. Culver's warehouse with his bag. As to these bandanas, Mr. Culver——"



Culver turned quick round upon him with the question,

“Is the King dead?”

“Lord bless my soul, what an idea! His Majesty dead! No, not that I have heard; nor even ill, for anything I know.”

Mr. Culver was not quite satisfied; so remarkable was Breme's method of inquiring after his stock of blacks—at the tail of their conversation, and yet with an evident design of immediately possessing himself of some pieces. He was not altogether mistaken. Breme had received private intelligence of the inevitable occurrence of a slight general mourning, and was anxious to have his assortment of black silks ready at once, and the fabric in imitation of his French pattern prepared against the expiration of the short mourning.

Culver was enough on his guard to avoid selling any of his stock quite so low as he might have done if no suspicion had crossed him. When the transaction was concluded, he stepped into Crispin-street, to consult the best skilled of his workmen on the matter of the new order.

## CHAPTER II.

## GIVING AN ORDER.

MR. CULVER was not unaccustomed to visit his work-people in their abodes, and knew very well what sights to expect on opening the door ; but he had never chanced to look in upon any one of them on an evening of January,—a dull month for trade, and almost the dreariest as to weather. He did not anticipate much that was comfortless in the aspect of Cooper's abode ; for Cooper was so good a workman as to be always employed while any business at all was doing. His wife was a more tidy body than many weavers are blessed with ; and her baby was far from resembling the miserable little creatures who may be seen in any street in London, with peaked chins, blue lips, and red noses, their ribs bent in with uncouth nursing, and legs bowed from having been made untimely to bear the weight of the swollen body. Mrs. Cooper's baby smiled a smile that was not ghastly, and danced in its father's arms when he had time to play with it, instead of wearing his heart with its cries when he should be sleeping the sleep which follows a day of hard labour.

Knowing all this, Mr. Culver was rather surprised by the first view of Cooper's apartment this night. Its atmosphere was apparently made up of the remains of the orange fog of the morning, the smoke from the chimney which could not make its way into the upper air, that which proceeded from the pipe of the old man who cowered over the dull fire, and that which curled magnificently from the dipped candles on either side the loom :—which candles seemed to yield one-tenth part light, and the rest to be made up of yellow tallow, wick growing into perpetual cauliflowers, and smoke. The loom was going, with its eternal smack and tick, serving, in co-operation with the gap under the door, for as admirable a ventilator as could have been wished for on the hottest day in August. Mrs. Cooper was discharging many offices in her own person ; being engaged now in snuffing the rapidly wasting candles, now in giving a fresh impulse to the rocking cradle, but chiefly in tying the threads of her husband's work, while he was intent, with foot, hands, and eye, on the complicated operations of his craft.

It seemed a somewhat unequal division of labour that these two should have so many tasks

upon their hands, while a third was sitting lazily smoking by the fire, who might as well have been tending the baby. But old Short had another occupation, which was vastly important in his own eyes, although it would sometimes have been gladly dispensed with by everybody about him. Old short was always grumbling. This being an avocation that he had ever found time for in his busiest days, it was not to be supposed that he would neglect it now that he had nothing else to do ; and accordingly his voice of complaint arose in all the intervals of Cooper's loom music, and formed a perpetual accompaniment to its softer sounds.

It was matter of some surprise to Mr. Culver, who believed that Cooper and his wife were justified in living comfortably if they chose, that they should continue to give a place at their fireside to a cross old man, to whom they were bound neither by relationship nor friendship. On the present occasion, his first remark, offered in an under-tone, was,

"So you have the old gentleman with you still ! He does not grow more pleased with the times, I suppose ?"

Cooper winked, and his wife smiled.

“ Have you any expectations from him ? Or what can induce you to give him house-room ? He is very well able to take care of himself, as far as I see.”

“ Very well, indeed, sir. He is as capable, as to his work, as ever, when he gets any : and it is trying sometimes to hear him talk ; but he is not the only person to feel the hardship of the times, sir ; and one must put up with a fault or two, for the sake of having a respectable lodger.”

“ He pays us fairly the little we ask for his share of our fire and our meals,” observed the wife ; “ and we are getting used to that tone of his by degrees ;—except, indeed, the baby. One would think baby knew what Short was talking about by its fidgeting and crying when he begins on a fresh complaint.”

Short was all this time listening to himself too intently to be aware what was said on the other side of the room. He missed Mr. Culver’s expression of concern at Cooper’s being obliged to add to his resources by having a boarder, but was roused by the exhibition of the pattern of French silk. He felt too much contempt for it, however, to look closely at it, when he heard *what it was*. He supposed it was one of the

new-fangled fashions people had taken to since the Spitalfields weavers had had their just wages held back from them. He had said what would happen when his brother weavers consented to take less wages than the Act gave them. The manufacture deserved to go down——

“I am quite of your opinion,” observed Mr. Culver. “We deserve to go down if we do not mend our methods. Look at the lustre of this pattern, and only feel its substance. We deserve not to prosper if we do not improve our fabrics, with such an example as this before us of what may be done.”

“Leave the French to mind their own matters,” replied the old man, “and let the English wear what is English, as they should.”

“You will find that rather difficult to manage, friend, if they like the French fabric better.”

“Never tell me, sir! It is a fancy, and a wicked fancy, that of liking French goods. Why, for wear, there is nothing like our brocades, that there was such a demand for when I was young. There was variety enough, too, in all conscience. There was the double and treble striped, and the strawberry-spotted, and ——”

"O yes, I remember, Mr. Short. The first waistcoat I danced a cotillon in was such a strawberry-spotted thing as you describe. Nothing like it to wear, as you say. Down came my little Lucy in it, the other day, to make us laugh; and, to be sure, the colours are as bright as ever. But then, there is nothing like those brocades for price either."

Short hated to hear such grumbling about the prices of things as was always to be heard now that the French had got a footing in the country. In old times, those that could afford to wear silk did not grudge a good price for it.

"Very true; but many more people wear silk now; and they are of a class to whom it is of consequence to pay no more than is necessary."

"Ay; and to please them, you have wrought your web thinner and thinner, till you have made it too thin for even the cheapness; and now you must learn from the French to give your fabric more substance."

"I am afraid we cannot do that for the same money; hey, Cooper?" said Mr. Culver, watching for the sentence which the weaver should pronounce when he should remove his magnifying glass from his eye, and give judgment on the pattern.

"I think we may do it, sir," pronounced Cooper. "I believe I see the principle of the thing; and I could make a fair imitation, I think. Not with the same body, of course. We cannot afford to put in equal material for the money; but a slighter fabric of the same pattern might sell, I have no doubt."

"If I might put in my word," said Mrs. Cooper, "I should recommend a higher price instead of a slighter fabric. It is more for the substance than the pattern that the French silks are preferred, I have heard say."

"My dear," said her husband, "I cannot pretend to rival a French weaver, if you give me leave to use all the silk that ever passed through a foreigner's loom. That is a point above me. So we had better content ourselves with a likeness as to figure and price.—I cannot conceive," he continued, as he turned the pattern over and over, and held it in various lights, "how the foreigners can afford their silks at such a price as to tempt our shopkeepers to the risk of the contraband trade."

"Never tell me!" cried Short again. "You do not really think that the French sell at the rate our shopkeepers say they do! It is all a



trick of the people at home, to spite those they have been jealous of so long. They may starve us ; but the law will be too strong for them, sooner or later."

"I rather hope that they may be too strong for the law," replied Mr. Culver. "If we can but get the law altered, our day of prosperity may come again. We might have learned by this time that all our hopes of selling our silks abroad are at an end, unless we improve like our neighbours, instead of wrapping ourselves up in the idea that nobody can ever equal us."

"Ay, I suppose it was under the notion that it was a fine thing to export, that we were forbidden to import silks," observed Cooper ; "but if they had only let us have a little free conversation with the French about their manufacture, we might by this time have had something as good as they to sell abroad."

"Or if not silks, something instead, which would have been produced out of what we should have saved from our expensive manufacture. If I had but the capital which is wasted in following our inferior methods, what fine things I would do with it for my family, and, in some sort, for my country !"

"I cannot imagine," Cooper again observed, "how the French afford their goods at the price they do. Whether it is that they have food cheaper, and therefore wages are lower, or whether it is that they have better machinery, I should like to come to a fair trial with them. If we can get upon an equality with them, well and good; there will be buyers at hand for all that we can make. If we cannot compete with them, better know it at once, and turn to something else, than be supplanted by means of a contraband trade, while our masters' money is spent in guarding the coast to no purpose."

"Never tell me!" interposed old Short. "You grumblers always grudge every farthing that is not spent upon yourselves."

"O, yes," replied Cooper, smiling; "we grumblers grudge every half-crown that is laid out on French silks in our neighborhood; and no wonder, friend."

"It is the Coast Guard I was thinking of," replied the old man. "There is Mrs. Nicholas's son just well settled in the Preventive Service; and now you are for doing away the whole thing. What is to become of the poor lad, I wonder?"

"Cooper will teach him to weave," said Mr. Culver, laughing. "So many more people would wear silks, if we had fair play, that we might make a weaver of a coast guardsman here and there."

Cooper feared it would be a somewhat difficult task to impart his skill to Nicholas, who was not over-bright in learning; but he would attempt more difficult things if they brought any chance of relief from the present unhappy state of affairs. He was as little given to despond as any man; and was more secure than many of his neighbours of being employed as long as there was occupation to be had; but it did make him tremble to look forward, when he reflected how his earning grew less, quarter by quarter.

"Ay; that is the way," muttered Short. "You let the masters off their bargain about wages, and then you complain that your earnings are small. People's folly is a mystery to me."

"As great a mystery as the black dye,—hey, Mr. Short?" said Mrs. Cooper.

The old man smiled with an air of condescension when Mr. Culver asked, "What of the black dye?"

“ Only that Mr. Rose was complaining of seldom having his goods dyed exact to pattern, sir ; and the dyer made an excuse about the air ;—some stuff that I forget, about the air being seldom two days alike at that time of year. As if the air had anything to do with black dye ! No, no,—never tell me ! ”

“ As great a mystery as the mishap with the steam-boat, perhaps, Mr. Short ? ”

“ Why, ay ; there is another piece of nonsense, sir. I happened to be at hand when the little steam-boat blew up, five years ago. I saw the planks and things blown clean on shore, sir ; and they would have had me believe that it was steam that did it. ‘ Never tell me,’ said I, ‘ that steam did all that.’ ”

“ How did it happen, then, do you suppose ? ”

“ What is that to me ? They might blow it up with gunpowder for anything that I cared. But about the dye,—that is a different matter altogether ; and so is the affair of the wages, since our bread depends on the one and the other. And as for throwing open our trade to those French rascals, never tell me that you are not all idiots if you wish for such a thing. I have woven my last piece, sir, if you prevail to bring

in a Frenchman to supplant me. Mark my words, sir, I have woven my last piece."

"I hope not, Short. I hope you will weave many another piece before you die, however we may arrange matters with the French. Meantime, if Cooper discovers the secret of yonder pattern, as I think he will, you must find a place for your loom at the other end of the room, and be ready for your share of the work.

Short muttered that new-fangled patterns did not suit old eyes and hands like his. He must starve with the starving, since he could not take his chance with those who were fond of change.—The mention of the starving left the parties no spirits for further conversation on other subjects; and Mr. Culver departed, while Cooper stepped back into his loom, and the old man resumed his pipe, full of contempt for all masters that were caught by a new pattern, and of all workmen that would have anything to say to such innovations. He only wished they would come first to him with their new schemes. He should enjoy bidding them weave for themselves, if they must have new fancies.

**CHAPTER III.****DUMB DUTY.**

COOPER had good reason for doubting his capability of teaching Nicholas to weave, and for thinking such a task the worst consequence that could result to him from the abolition or reduction of the Coast Guard. There were, indeed, few things that Nicholas could learn to do, and it was therefore a happy circumstance for himself and his mother that his present appointment had been obtained for him. He had good eyes, and a set of strong limbs, so that he stood as fair a chance as a brighter man of seeing a boat on the waves, and of sustaining his six hours' watch to the satisfaction of his officer, in ordinary times. How he might conduct himself at any crisis,—whether he would do what he ought on seeing a suspicious vessel near the coast, or whether any human power could prevail with him to alter the periods or the mode of his watch without deranging all his faculties,—was another question: but no emergency having arrived since his appointment, Nicholas

was, as yet, in very good repute with every body about him. Lieutenant Storey had never found fault with him; and Mrs. Storey had more than once bestowed a word and a smile on him, in answer to his reverential salutation, and the open-mouthed admiration with which he was perceived to regard his officer's young bride. His mates let him alone except at those lounging times when one person did as well as another to make remarks to about the state of the weather and the water, and the prospects of the fishing below. As for the villagers, they were, from some cause or other, more civil to Nicholas than they usually were to men of his calling; so that he determined, at least once a day, that he was a favourite of fortune, and had uncommon reason to be grateful to Providence. At least once a day;—for so often did he usually rest his knee against a certain big stone on the beach, and look seaward through his telescope: on the first occasion of doing which, it had entered his mind that his mother admired him very much, and that everybody was very kind to him. Each time afterwards that he used the same action, he thought that everybody was very kind to him, and that his mother admired

him very much ; and he grew fond of this stone, and of using his telescope in that particular place. By a sort of instinct, he rose from his knee, and shot his instrument into his case, as soon as any annoyance was suspected to be approaching ; so that he was pretty sure of keeping his periodical mood in its primitive state.

This method of his,—of having a particular time and place fixed in which to enjoy, and another in which to endure,—was vexatious to those who delighted in teasing. The children of the village could never fix Nicholas to his stone ; and when he was upon his watch he would bear anything. This being considered a settled matter, they left off attacking him at such times, leaving it to the wind and rain to overthrow his tranquillity if they could. Nicholas was not destined, however, to be always so favoured above his more irritable companions, as he found one bitter February day, when the hardships of the watch were quite enough of themselves for an ordinary stock of patience.

A dense fog hung so low that there was no use in keeping watch on the heights, and the Coast Guard were therefore stationed along the margin, in the exact position for being drenched



by the spray, nipped by the wind, and stifled by the fog, as they looked with anxious gaze over the dull sea, which appeared more like a heaving expanse of oil than a congregation of waters. There was small use in peering abroad ; for the mist hung like a curtain till within a furlong of the beach. As little comfort was there in looking inland. The near cliffs of Beachy Head seemed icy, and the sea-birds that dwelt there appeared to be cowering in their holes from the cold. The fishermen's huts bore the comfortless aspect that wooden houses always do when their roofs are loaded with snow ; and even the station-house, perched on the highest point of the cliffs, seemed deprived for the time of its air of cleanliness and comfort. Just at the moment when the fog fell most chilly, and the spray flew most searchingly, and the rattle of the waves on the shingle sounded most dreary, a troop of children came wandering by, some of the little ones threatening to cry with cold, but the elder ones not having had the spirit of mischief yet starved out of them. They were pupils of Mr. Pim, the village schoolmaster, and were on their way to their several homes from his well-warmed school-room. One of the troop, a brown, handsome,

roguish-looking boy, ran up to Nicholas with—

“I say, Mister, sir, what’s your name?—what’s o’clock?”

Of course, Nicholas made no answer; and the question was put in all forms which could be expected to provoke a reply,—all to no purpose.

“I say, master, let me hold your spy-glass while you blow upon your fingers; you can’t hold it. There! bang it goes! Lord! look, there it goes again! He can’t hold his spy-glass no more than a baby.”

The joke now was to twitch his coat-tail, or otherwise startle Nicholas, so as to cause him to drop his glass as often as his benumbed fingers raised it to the level of his eye.

“Look, look! if his eyes be not running over every time the wind blows. Look! how he blinks away from the fog, every puff that comes! A pretty watch he makes! I say, what is that black thing yonder, sir? It is a boat, as sure as I am alive. You had better look sharp, sir.”

“No, not that way,” said another; “more to the right, near to that cliff. No, no; this way, to the left. Why, man, you have lost your eyes!”

The rogues were delighted to see that, though Nicholas made no reply, his head wagged from

right to left, and from left to right, as they chose to turn it. When he had gazed till the fog had drawn closer round the nearer headlands, and when he wiped his eyes in the cutting wind with his coat-sleeve, till they watered faster than ever, the joke was improved upon. The children crowded together in a sheltered corner, and invited Nicholas to come too, and be comfortable, instead of standing to be buffeted like a sea-gull that knew no better. They tantalized him with accounts of what they were going to do at home, —with mention of hot broth and potatoes, of fire, of shelter, and of everything comfortable that he was not likely to have for nearly six hours to come. Nicholas was immoveable; and when they were tired of plaguing him, and ran off with expressions of insulting pity, he paced his allotted walk without any sign of anger or discontent. His first token of emotion of any kind was a vehement laugh, when he saw what next befell the little brown boy who had begun the attack on him.

The boy's companions had warned him of the uselessness of trying to provoke Nicholas, and had recommended Brady in preference,—Brady, the Irishman, who was known to find it neces-

sary to keep the thought of punishment before him, in order to hold his tongue when jeered by those who would take advantage of his not being able to answer. About Brady, therefore, gathered the small fry ; and they pestered him till he turned suddenly round, seized Uriah Faa, the gipsy boy, and laid him sprawling, just in advance of a ninth wave, as it was rolling on. The boy yelled, Brady resumed his walk, the other children scampered off, full of fear and wrath, and Nicholas laughed aloud.


“ Really now, I call that very cruel,” said a sweet voice behind him. “ I would not do such a thing as that for the world ; and I should be very sorry to laugh at it. Would not you, Elizabeth ? ”

“ O, yes ; but what can you expect from a set of creatures like this Coast Guard, that are put here to plague the people ? ” replied Elizabeth.

Overwhelmed with grief and shame stood Nicholas, tongue-tied under a charge which wounded him keenly. Elizabeth’s contempt did not trouble him very much, though a stranger might have pronounced her a more particular looking lady than her companion, from her being more gaily dressed, and carrying more

grandeur in her air. His grief was that the tender-hearted, sweet-spoken little lady, who never bore ill-will to anybody, should think him cruel. It was his duty to seem to take no notice, and to go on looking out for vessels; but Nicholas could not so play the hypocrite when Mrs. Storey was in question. An observer might have been amused at the look of misery with which he seemed about to ask leave to go down on his knees on the wet shingle, and must have been convinced that no thought of contraband traders was in his mind as he turned to watch the ladies proceeding on their bleak way. Nicholas's only resource was to resolve to speak in defence of his comrade and himself, as soon as his watch should be ended.

In a very short time, it appeared as if the lady's words as well as the boy's cries, had made themselves heard up the country. From one recess or another of the cliffs dropped picturesque forms, in gipsy guise, all directing their steps towards that part of the beach where Brady and Nicholas were stationed on the margin of the tide. A fisherman or two looked out lazily from the cottages; and there more active wives drew their cloaks about them, and hasten-



ed down to see what would ensue on the ducking of a mischievous boy.

"Goodness, Matilda!" cried Elizabeth, "they are coming this way. Mercy! they are going to speak to us. Which way shall we run? What shall we do?"

And without waiting for an answer to her questions, the lady took to flight, and scudded towards the cliff path as fast as her trembling limbs would carry her, screaming by the way, as often as any one person came nearer to her than another. Matilda, not quite foolish enough to follow at the same rate, but very much alarmed, was immediately surrounded by gipsies, vociferating in a language which she did not understand, and pointing so angrily towards the guard, that it was plain she would be safer without their protection than with it. The state of affairs was not improved by the junction of the fishermen's wives.

"O, Mrs. Alexander," cried the lady, addressing the best known face among the latter, "what do these people want with me? What are they going to do?"

"They want you to bear witness, my lady, how the boy Uriah has been used by these cruel-

hearted, thieving rogues, that don't care what mischief they do with their hands, while they have never a tongue in their heads, but creep about like spies."

"Perhaps it is very well that the tongues are all on one side," said the trembling lady; "there is no saying how quarrels might otherwise issue, Mrs. Alexander."

"Bless us! how you shake with cold, my lady! Only think what it must be to be laid flat in the water, as Uriah was by yon villain's hands. If they had been frozen off by the wrists, it would only have served him right. One would think you had been in the water too, Ma'am, by your shaking."

"I am in hot water just now," declared Matilda, half laughing. "Cannot you call off these rude people, and prevent their pressing round me? You seem to know them."

"O yes, sure, Ma'am; and you would know them too, if you had been a little longer in this place. It is only old Faa, the gipsy, and his tribe, that come here every winter. The lady that was with you just now knows very well who they are, and where they live, for all her running away so fast."

"I wish she would come back then, for I cannot tell what in the world to say to them, Mr. Faa! Which is Mr. Faa?"

A grisly-looking old gipsy stepped forward.

"You do not suspect me of having caused your boy to be dipped, I hope?"

All bowed, and vociferated their horror at such an idea.

"Neither must you expect me to bid you duck those men. It is a very cold day; and I am so sorry to have witnessed one ducking, that I should be very unwilling to see any body else laid under water."

This was perhaps the most foolish speech she could have made, as it put into their heads the idea of summary vengeance. She saw her mistake in the increased rage of the people, and the look of defiance that Brady put on. There was little use now in saying that there might have been fault on both sides, and that it was best to forgive and forget. There was no use in offering to tell the Lieutenant what had happened, and in answering for it that such an offence should not happen again; the people were determined to make the most of having the officer's lady on their side, and of the present opportuni-



ty of gratifying their hatred of the Coast Guard. All the ungracious acts ever committed there by a coast guard rushed into their remembrance ; how one neighbor had been stopped and searched on the beach, and the fire of another put out on the cliff, under the suspicion of its being a signal ; how the boat of a third could never come home without being entered by these spies ; and how, once upon a time, a person had been shot by a choleric number of the Preventive Force. All these sins seemed likely to be now visited on the heads of Brady and Nicholas, when a mediator appeared in the shape of Pim, the schoolmaster, the most potent personage between the martello towers and Parson Darby's Hole, —a so-called cavern in the cliffs of Beachy Head.

Mr. Pim owed his influence, not to any physical force, though he was the tallest and stoutest man within five miles ; nor to wealth, for he professed to have nothing but his village day-school to support his family upon ; nor to any connexion with the great, for he was a bluff, homely personage, who did not want or care for anybody's favours ; nor to his own superior wit, *for no one was aware of his being remarkably*

endowed in this way. It was partly that he had given to his neighbors all the book-learning that they could boast of, and the little religion that they professed. It was yet more that he had been a long resident with his family, after having early buried his wife among them. But, above all, it was his merry heart, making itself understood by a voice mighty enough to outbellow the waves at Beachy Head, that was the charm of Mr. Pim. He liked to be told that he should have been a preacher, with such a voice as his, and would forthwith enact the reverend gentleman for a minute or two; but he could never make his splendid voice bring out any thing but little jokes with small wit in them; for the good reason that his brain would supply nothing else. Nothing more was necessary, however, to constitute him the most popular man within his sphere.

"Hi, hi! what is all this about?" was the question that came travelling through the air, as soon as his tall form became visible, approaching from the houses. "What are you buzzing about here for, when your young one is toasting at home, as dry as the cod-sounds that hang over his head? Toasting! ay, at my fire. I

met him dripping like a duck, and he would have slunk away ; but it was up with him this way ;" and he seized upon a boy standing near, and threw him across his shoulder, twisting him about with one hand as if he had been a doll. " This way I carried him home, unwilling enough, to my Rebecca. " Here, Beck," says I, " take him and toast him till I come back to give him a flogging." And now he is expecting me, so I must be off, as soon as you will please to give over quarrelling, and march home. Flog him ! ay, to be sure, for disturbing these men at their duty. It is a fine thing, you gipsy gentlemen, to have put your young folks under the rod ; and it would be a thousand pities not to use it. You can't get the impish spirit out of them all in a day."

" But has the boy done wrong ? " inquired Mrs. Storey. " Even if he has, he has surely been punished enough."

" Not while ill blood is left, my lady. I never leave off punishing my boys till they laugh with me, and it is all right again. If Mr. Faa will undertake to make his boy laugh as much as he cried half an hour ago, he is welcome to

be an end of this silly business. You, sir," to Brady, "thrust your pistol into your pocket, or I will help you to chuck it deeper into the sea than you can go to fetch it."

Brady looked as angry now as the gipsies had done when they heard that Uriah was to be flogged; but neither party could long withstand Pim's authoritative style of good humour. He ended with making every body laugh, turning the attention of the guard seawards, dispersing the group of complainers in different directions, and adjourning the quarrel, if he could not dissolve it. As he attended the lady to the station-house, he explained to her the little hope there was of establishing a good understanding between the Coast Guard and the country people.

"I pity the poor fellows down below, with all my heart," said he, turning from the first point of the ascent to observe the guard, now again loitering along the margin. "Not so much for being out in the cold, though they slap themselves with their swinging arms like yon flag in a high wind. It is not for the cold I pity them, since a young lady keeps them company in it."

"I seldom stay within all day, especially when

Miss Storey is with me," replied Matilda ; " but I would not promise to bear this cold for six hours ; and I do pity those poor men very much."

" So do I, madam, because they moreover meet cold looks at every turn ; which you, not being a spy, will never do."

" But these men are spies only upon those who break the laws. You do not mean that the innocent are not glad to be watched ?"

Pim looked sly while he said he knew but of one innocent in all the neighbourhood, and he happened to be among the spies, and so was very popular. Mrs. Storey would go deeper than the pun, however, and asked whether the neighbours generally had need to fear the enforcement of the law.

" I bring up all my scholars so religious, it would do your heart good to see them," replied Pim. " They know the Bible all through, and understand the whole of the Church Catechism, as you will find, if you will give us the honour of a visit some day."

" I will, to morrow, Mr. Pim."

" Suppose we say the end of the week, ma'am, *when they are furbished up for the parson.* You

will be more sure of being pleased towards the end of the week. I make my scholars very moral."

"Then they have no reason to fear spies, I should think."

"Why, as to that, ma'am, it all depends on people's notions of what it is to be moral; and when there is so much difference of opinion on that, it seems natural enough that each party should settle the point as seems most agreeable. I wonder, now, what you think of the gentlefolks that come to Hastings and Brighton, and all the bathing places along this coast."

"I suppose they are much like other gentlefolks, are they not? How do their morals affect those of your scholars?"

"Why, just this way. If ladies in their walks make acquaintance with the fishermen's children, and use that as a pretence for calling on their mothers, and letting drop that they would be glad of a lot of gloves or silk hose from over beyond there, is not it natural for the cottage-girls to think the bargain a very pretty and proper one, when they see the goods brought out of the cupboard? And if gentlemen drop in here and there, as they saunter about, to taste

French brandy, or pocket a few cigars, is it not likely that the lads hereabouts, who are fond of adventures at all times, will take the hint, and try their luck at sea on dark nights?"

"But are such practices common among visitors to the coast?"

"Are they not?—And those who do not care to step across a poor man's threshold themselves are ready enough to buy of such as will; of the shop-keepers at Brighton, and others that import largely. Now all this is what the law calls immoral, while the people see no reason to think so."

"And which side do you take,—you who make your scholars so moral?"

"I take neither side in my teaching, but leave the matter to be settled according as the children have friends among the cottagers, or in the coast guard, or the law, or the custom-house. But there is one thing I do try to teach them,—not to quarrel with other people about the right and the wrong, nor to hate anybody, but let the whole thing go on quietly. God knows, it is hard work enough; but I do try. It is hard work; for they hate each of those watchers as *if he had cloven feet and a long tail.*"

"How do you set about making the guard beloved?"

"Nay, nay, that is too much to try. And it is doubly difficult to me from my having a son in the custom-house; which exposes me to be called partial; but I always say, 'Hate them in your hearts as much as you will; but you owe it to your kind and country not to show it. Be as civil to the king's servants as you would to his majesty himself.'"

"I am afraid you do not always succeed; I should as soon think of telling a man that he need not mind having a fever; but he must take particular care that his hands be not hot."

"Where we cannot do every thing, ma'am, we must do what we can. How should I prevent the guard being unpopular, when they act as spies every hour of the day and night? And would you have me declare them always in the right when it is their very business to prevent people getting the goods that they want and will have? As long as people will drink brandy, and smoke tobacco, and wear silks and laces, I see no use in preaching to them to buy dear when they can buy cheap. All I pretend to is to make as little harm come of it as possi-



ble ; to persuade the people to sell their spirits instead of drinking them, and avoid brawls with the enemy they must submit to have set over them."

"With my husband and his men," said Mrs. Storey, smiling at the idea of her husband's being any man's enemy. The notion was almost as absurd (in a different way) in relation to him as to Nicholas.

"You see, ma'am, it is not only that this Coast Guard is a terrible spoil-sport ; it is a very expensive thing. When the people pay their taxes, and when they look at the nearest Custom-house,—aye, every time a Preventive officer has a new coat, they remember that they pay for keeping spies over themselves. This is provoking, you will allow ; and many's the time they throw it in my teeth,—I having a son in the Custom-house, as I said."

"Why do you not tell them that, if there were no duties, they would lose their trade at the same time that they get rid of their enemies ? Do not they see that fishermen would no longer be employed in fetching silks and spirits, if there were no laws to hinder merchants from doing it *as cheaply* ? I should like to see how your

neighbours would look if every custom-house was pulled down throughout the country, and every man in the Preventive Service sent about other business."

"Why, then, I suppose, fishermen would be simply fishermen, and my son must come and help me to keep school,—if any school remained for me to keep."

"How would such an arrangement interfere with your school?"

Mr. Pim mysteriously gave the lady to understand that fishermen cannot commonly afford schooling for their children, unless they have some resource beyond their boats and nets. Nobody knew how much of the money circulating in this neighborhood came through the breach of the laws which some of it was employed to maintain. He went on,—

"It would be some comfort that there would be fewer taxes for us to pay; and if government kept up reasonable duties (which would be but fair) the burden would fall lightly upon all. Government would not be cheated; we should not be insulted with useless taxes and with spies, and——"

"And some of you would have your pockets

lightened of much ill-gotten money, and your hearts of much hatred that it is shocking to think of," replied the lady.

"Moreover, we should see less of the gipsies," observed Mr. Pim. "Whether this would be a good or an evil, is a point that some of us might differ upon ; but it is certain that they would not settle in bleak places like this in winter, if there were not something likely to happen in the long nights to repay them for the bitterness of the short days. They would not like our bare sandy levels and our cold caverns better than a snug London alley, if there were not good things to be had here that do not fall in their way there."

"You would lose a scholar or two if the gipsies kept away. I cannot think how you persuaded such people to send their children to school."

Pim laughed heartily, but gave no explanation. As they drew near the turf-fence of the station-house, he stopped to contemplate the place, and observed that it was a neat, tight little dwelling, and pleasanter, he should think, for a lady to live in than the martello towers farther *on*. *There was something dreary-looking in*

those towers, as if they must be cold in winter and hot in summer, perched upon the bare sands, and made up of thick walls with few windows. Whereas, the white station-house seemed just the place which might suitably have plants trained against it now that a lady's fine taste reigned within (supposing the wind would let them grow); and as for its winter evening comforts,—when he saw gleams from the window piercing the darkness, like a lesser beacon, he could only be sorry for the Lieutenant that it was ever necessary to leave such a fire-side as there must be within, to go out amidst scenes where—where—

“Where he is much less welcome,” replied Matilda, smiling. “I dare say your people,—fishermen, gipsies, schoolmasters, and all,—would strongly recommend my husband staying where he is comfortable, let what will be doing on the beach.”

“And I am sure you should, my lady, as a good wife. If you knew——”

“Do not tell me,” replied Matilda, hastily. “I will hear of those things from nobody but my husband himself.”

While Mr. Pim was inwardly saying that the

lady would scarcely hear from the Lieutenant the worst that could be told, Miss Storey came running to the gate, full of wonder whether all was safe, and what the gipsies had done to Matilda, and how her sister-in-law had prospered since she herself had so valiantly left her side. Matilda did not trouble herself to reply with more civility than Elizabeth deserved ; but bestowed all the overplus on the schoolmaster, whom she invited in to enjoy the comforts of shelter and fire.

Mr. Pim could not stay to do more than compliment the lady on her endurance of the sharp cold of the sea-shore. He concluded she would scarcely pass her doors again till milder weather should come.

“ O yes, I shall,” replied Matilda. “ Be the weather what it may, I shall come and visit your daughter and see how you make your scholars moral, gipsies and all.”

The gipsies were the most moral people in the world, to judge by the punctuality and liberality of their payments, Mr. Pim declared ; and when the imp was whipped out of them, they made very good scholars. With this explanation, and something between a bow and a nod,

the rosy schoomaster took his leave, and, with his hands behind him, and beginning to whistle before the ladies had turned their backs, shuffled briskly down the slope to the sea-shore.

---

## CHAPTER IV.

## AN AFTERNOON TRIP.

MATILDA could not imagine why Elizabeth had not gone home, instead of waiting all this time at the station house. It must be past Mrs. Storey's dinner hour, and there seemed some reason to fear that Elizabeth meant to stay for the rest of the day. If she did, however, she must invite herself, Matilda resolved ; for it was far from being her own inclination to have any guest on this particular occasion ;—the day of her husband's return after an absence of half a week,—the terrible first absence after a marriage of six weeks. They had met only for one hour in the forenoon ; dinner-time would soon bring him home, and it would be too provoking to have a third person to intrude, especially if that

third person were Elizabeth, of whom the Lieutenant was more fond than his wife could at all account for. Elizabeth might see, if she chose, that she was unwelcome ; for Matilda had no intention of concealing the fact. She neither sat down, nor asked Elizabeth to do so ; but, throwing off her bonnet, and stirring the fire, employed herself next in rectifying the time-piece by her own watch.

"My dear," Elizabeth began, strenuously warming herself.

"I wish she would not call me "my dear." " thought Matilda ; " it is so old maidish." But Matilda might have known that a wife of twenty is very naturally called "my dear," by a sister-in-law of thirty-five.

"My dear," resumed Elizabeth, "you talked of going to see Mr. Pim's school. We may as well go together. Fix your time."

Matilda could not fix any time at present. Her husband had been absent, and her engagements must depend on his for some days to come.

"Very well. I know he is always out between ten and one o'clock ; and that will be your *time*. I shall expect you some morning soon,

between ten and twelve, as the school breaks up at noon. It lies straight past our door; but if you wish me to call you, I can easily come up."

"O, by no means, thank you. But we shall meet before the end of the week, and can fix all about it. Mr. Pim wishes us not to go till the end of the week, when the children will have their catechism at their tongues' ends."

"As to meeting, I do not know," replied Elizabeth. "I am going to be very busy for some days. And indeed it is time I was at home now; for I promised my mother to cut out a cap for her before dark." And Elizabeth extended her hand to take her muff.

"Indeed!" cried Matilda, briskly. "Let me walk part of the way home with you. And you must allow me to help you with your work. You know I have nothing to do, and——"

"So it seems, indeed," replied Elizabeth, looking round with a supercilious smile, upon the bare work-table, the perfectly-arranged bookshelves, and the closed piano, which collectively presented a picture of a most bride-like lack of occupation.

"If you are inclined to send up your mother's handkerchiefs," said Matilda, coldly, "*it will give me great pleasure to make them.*"



"Not for the world," Elizabeth declared. So fond as her brother was of Matilda's music, and so much as they were to read together, Matilda could have no time for anybody's affairs but her own;—a decision which Matilda submitted to in silence. Elizabeth proceeded to deliver a dozen messages from her mother to the young house-keeper, about the butcher, and the milkman, and their own, dear, favourite fisherman, who supplied them so much better than the one Matilda patronized. She must positively begin to buy her fish of him directly, though they would not for the world interfere with her little domestic plans; but she might not know that George liked above all things——

Matilda sprang to the window, seeing something through the gathering dusk like the skirt of a coat. It was only the sentinel, however, and she drew back disappointed, and applied herself to examine whether her hyacinths were duly supplied with water.

"Just one thing more," Elizabeth said.

"You will excuse my mother observing (but indeed we could not help it) the plaiting of George's shirts. It is impossible you should know all his ways yet,—indeed how should you?

—so, I will just mention that he has been used  
——”

“How very dark it is growing!” observed Matilda, once more peering out into the dusk.

“O no, it is not so bad out of doors,” she added, when she had thrown up the sash. “It is impossible to tell what the weather is like, the windows being double, and such a state as they are always in with the damp from the sea. I wish, with all your management, Elizabeth, you would teach one how to keep one’s windows clear and bright by the sea-side. It spoils half the pleasure of working or reading in this window-seat. In the summer time, however, when one can sit with the window open, it will be delightful. But it really is getting dark.”

“I am going,” said Elizabeth, quietly. “You shall have your husband all to yourself to-day, my dear. By the way, do you mean to tell him of that little affair down below this morning?”

“Do I mean to tell him?” cried Matilda, astonished. “To be sure. I tell him every thing.”

“O, very well. I would only just give a hint that that plan may not always be prudent, my dear: that is all. You are in a very responsible

situation, you should remember ; such ticklish terms as your husband and his men are on with the people about you. A little indiscretion on your part,—perfectly natural at your age,—may bring on bloodshed, are you aware. Do you know, my dear, I would not be in your place for the world.”

“ Would not you ? ” replied Matilda, with astonishing tranquillity.

“ Why, only think of the incident of this day. How do we know what may arise out of it, if you repeat it to George ? He must take notice of it, when otherwise it might pass over.”

“ Without his hearing how you shrieked and ran away,” thought Matilda ; and she was strongly tempted to say it, but refrained : and when Elizabeth at length found that she really must be going if she meant to be at home before dark, the sisters by marriage parted on friendly terms.

The Lieutenant looked somewhat graver than usual when he came in to dinner, and little disposed to talk while a third person was present. Moreover, he had the air of listening in the intervals between the clattering of plates and knives, and the creaking of the servant’s shoes.

Before drawing to the fire, when the door was at length closed behind table-cloth and cheese, he went to the window to look out,—the dull window which allowed little to be seen through its salted panes. He was about to repair to an upper window, but Matilda wrapped her head in a shawl, and threw up the sash.

"You would have me believe," she said, in answer to her husband's fears, "that I am not fit to live in this place: but I scorn both wind and fog. If you should wish to set a watch in Parson Darby's hole, I believe I should serve your purpose as well as any body;—as long, I mean, as no fighting was required."

"Let us see what you will make of it to-night, without going to Parson Darby's hole. If your eyes and ears are better than mine, I may be glad of them presently."

"What am I to look and listen for? This booming sea is enough to prevent our hearing anything else, unless it be two of your gruff men talking close by the window. What else do you expect me to hear?"

"Possibly a whistle, which may be heard among all conceivable combinations of hoarse sounds."

"But your own men whistle."

"Not to-night. They have orders to the contrary."

"Mr. Pim whistles perpetually, when he is not mimicking a whining, whipped scholar, or waiting the explosion of some practical joke. What is to be done with poor Mr. Pim, if he is caught in the fact?"

"He will take care to be caught in no fact that will do him any harm. Only tell him you hear a whistle; that is all. And point out any signal you may see;—but, I dare say, you do not know how to look for one."

"I wish you would take me out, and teach me."

"What, now? This bitter evening? My love, you could scarcely keep your footing in this wind. And it is so dark ——"

"So much the better for a first lesson. If you are really going yourself, do take me with you."

In two minutes Matilda was ready, laughing at the appearance she made with her head swathed in a shawl, and the rest of her person in a cloak, to save the annoyance which her usual out-of-doors dress would have been in a high wind. Clinging to her husband, making

many a false step, and invariably laughing as she recovered her footing, she gained the ridge of the cliff, and stood amidst all the sublimity of a gusty night on the wild sea-shore. The blast took away her breath, as fast as she gained it, and her husband's voice was almost lost in the roar and dash from beneath, while the lightest of her shriller tones made itself heard through the commotion.

"Now shew me how to look for a signal," she said. "They do not surely light fires on the headlands?"

"If they wished it, they must ask leave of the wind," replied her husband, "as well as of us; and they know they will have no leave of the one or the other, to-night. No: they make their fires in the clefts and caverns, and——"

"I see one! I see one!" cried Matilda, eagerly pointing to a gleam which came and went, like a bright speck on the horizon.

"That, my love!" cried her husband, laughing. "They must be bold smugglers who would run in to such a light as that. That is the light on Belltoot, made to look distant by the fog. You should turn eastwards; and seek rather for indications of a light, than for the

light itself. If you see a dull red streak, or the least glimmer upon the passing fog, show it me. It will tell that there is a fire in a chalk pit or a cavern."

After looking for some time in vain, Matilda inquired whether there was reason to suppose that the smugglers were particularly busy this night. Not knowing who might be near in the darkness, her husband pressed her arm in token that questions of this nature would be better answered at home.

They walked on till they fell in with one of the sentinels, who was of opinion that nothing out of the common way would be done to-night, as the storm was rising to such a height as would make it too hazardous for even the most daring smugglers to run in at Birling Gap, or at any other place on the neighboring coast.

"You hear, Matilda," said the Lieutenant. "Now, have you seen all that you wish to see?"

"By no means," she replied, laughing: "but it does not seem likely that we should gain anything by staying; so you had better go down and finish your wine, and we can come again to-morrow night."

The sudden calm and quiet of the little parlour

made the Lieutenant rub his hands under the sense of comfort, while Matilda put back her lank hair from over her eyes, and prepared to tell the story of the morning. The Lieutenant had however already heard it. Matilda was glad of this, and went on to ask if any harm could possibly arise from telling her husband every thing that happened to her, and all that she observed. No harm in the world, but possibly a great deal of good. It might put her on her guard against doing and saying things which were perfectly innocent and amiable in themselves, but which might be imprudent under certain circumstances;—such as showing herself indignant on seeing a gipsy boy ducked, when the neighbours were already quite angry enough on his account. The Lieutenant loved to see her ardour in such causes; but he was sorry to say it did not consist with the prudence necessary to be observed by any one connected with him, in his present office. This was enough to make Matilda vituperate the office, till she remembered that by its means her husband was detained by her side, instead of being dispatched to the other end of the world. It required this and many other comforting considerations to reconcile the Lieutenant himself



to this service, uncongenial as it was to the spirit of an active and enterprising officer, who had no particular pleasure in playing the spy on a grand scale, and who found it galling to a kindly temper to live among a host of enemies. He had hesitated long about accepting the appointment, entertaining, in addition to his disinclination, a fear that it would be an effectual bar to further promotion. If it had not been that his mother and sister depended mainly on him for support, and that, having waited till forty, he wished to marry, he would hardly have bartered the hope of professional eminence for pecuniary advantage ; but circumstanced as he was, he thought it right to accept an appointment which allowed him to enjoy the fruits of former service while gaining more by present duty. Though satisfied that he had done right, and fully sensible of the blessing of having a home always about him, he had no objection to hear the Preventive Service found fault with in a quiet way by his own fireside, and foreign service exalted at its expense.

“ What could put it into your head, Matilda, that harm could come of your telling me every thing? The prudence I speak of relates to

your reserve with our neighbors, not with me. What could have put such an idea into your head?"

"Elizabeth thought that I had not better tell you every thing. But if I really have a difficult part to act I shall be miserable without your help, I never could act for myself in my life."

"Never?" asked her husband, with a smile. "I think you can boast of one act of remarkable decision, my love."

"Half the merit, at least, was yours," replied Matilda, laughing. "And as for guiding myself without you, it is out of the question. So I must tell you all that happens, and you must teach me how to behave to our neighbours."

Her husband paused for a moment to reflect what a pity it was that, when Matilda's natural behaviour was all that was charming, she should be put under restraint by the position she filled. It was a hard task to have to teach her to suspect her neighbors, and to frame her conduct by her suspicions.

"*You* have no reason for trying to manage me by reserves," said he. "Elizabeth has, no doubt, her own little mysteries."

Matilda looked up surprised. She had never

before heard the Lieutenant speak of his sister but with fondness and confidence.

"I mean no reproach," he continued. "Elizabeth is a good creature, and the best of sisters to me. I only mean that she has her womanish tastes, which, like other women, she must gratify; and she knows it is the properest and kindest thing to let me know nothing of her confidential visits to the fishermen's wives. I cannot prevent her doing what every body else does; and it is better that I should not be obliged to take any notice."

"What *do* you mean?" cried Matilda. "Is it possible that Elizabeth has anything to do with smugglers? that——"

"Ah, now you have started upon a new scent, my dear; and let us see what you can make of it before you get home again.—Now you are fancying Elizabeth out at sea at night in the lugger we are looking for, or helping to land the goods; and the first day that passes without your seeing her, you will fancy she has taken a trip to Guernsey. Do not you begin to see how a thousand little mysterious circumstances are now explained? Cannot you account for——"

---

Matilda held up her hand as petitioning to be heard, while her fond husband delighted himself with her signs of impatience under his raillery. —She protested that she knew perfectly well what his charge against Elizabeth amounted to; that she contrived to buy articles of dress better and cheaper by the seaside than these could be procured in shops. She only wished to say, that she desired to acquit Elizabeth as far as her testimony would go. She had no reason to suppose, from anything that she had seen, that Elizabeth was given to such practices.

“It may be some time before she takes you into her confidence in these matters, my dear. Meantime, do not let us talk of “charge” and “acquittal,” as if Elizabeth had committed a crime. If I thought so, I would not have credited the fact on any testimony whatever.”

“How then can you be what you are?” exclaimed Matilda. “If you think smuggling is no crime, why do you engage to spend your days in suspicion, and your nights in watching, and even to spill human blood, if necessary, to prevent contraband trading?”

“My office springs out of a set of arbitrary regulations which may possibly be necessary to

the general good of society. At any rate, they subsist, and they must be maintained as long as the nation does not decide that they shall be abolished. This is all we Preventive officers have any concern with. It does not follow that we must condemn a lady for preferring one sort of lace or silk stockings to another, or for trying to get them, when she knows government has failed in the attempt to keep them out of the country."

"You say this just because Elizabeth is in question," replied Matilda. "Suppose I were to report it to the Admiralty, or the Board of Trade—how would it look upon paper?"

"I dare say you would not find a man at the Admiralty, or any where else,—a sensible man, —who would declare a taste for foreign commodities,—for as large a variety of commodities as possible, of the best kinds, to be anything but a good. No man of sense wishes the society in which he lives to be in that state of apathy which does not desire what is best, but only to be saved trouble. Neither does he recommend that the desire of that which is best should be gratified at the greatest possible expense and trouble."

“Certainly, one would rather see one’s neighbours wishing for French silks, than being content with skins of beasts; and, if they must have silks, one would rather get the material from Italy and India than have establishments for silkworms at home at a vast expense.”

“To be sure. And we might as well at once wish for English beet-root sugar, or for claret made from hot-house grapes, as condemn Elizabeth for desiring to have foreign lace. As for our countrymen liking to have tobacco duty-free, when the duty amounts to a thousand per cent. on the prime cost,—there is nothing to be wondered at in that. Moreover, the desire of foreign commodities is the cause of a great saving. These goods are not permanently desired because they are foreign. Their having acquired a reputation as foreign must arise from their being better or cheaper than our own. Our own productions of the same kind are either improved through the competition thus caused, or they give way in favour of other productions which we can in turn offer to foreigners better and cheaper than their own. If nobody cared for claret and tobacco, thousands of our people, who are busy in preparing that which is given

in exchange for these articles, would be idle ; and if we were bent upon growing our own tobacco, and forcing vines instead of buying of our neighbours, the expense would be tremendous, and would answer no good purpose on earth that I can see. So Elizabeth is as much at liberty to wish for Brussels lace, if she prefers it to Honiton, as I feel myself to fill my glass with this good Port in preference to my mother's gooseberry."

"I should think nobody doubts all this about wine, and sugar, and tobacco," said Matilda. "But when it comes to the question of manufactures that really can maintain a rivalry,—then is the time, I suppose, when it is said to be wrong to wish for foreign goods. As long as really good silks, and really beautiful laces are made in England, at a moderate price, is there any occasion to buy of foreigners?"

"Whether there is occasion, is soon proved by the fact of our looking or not looking abroad. As I said before, if these articles are to be had as good at home, we shall not look abroad ; if not, it is a waste of money and trouble to be making them, when we might be making something which foreigners would be glad to take

in exchange for their laces and silks. If the rival manufactures are a match for each other, let them fight it out, and the nations will be sure not to be charged more than is necessary for their purchases. If they are not a match for each other, it is sheer waste to uphold the weakest; and the taste for foreign goods is of use as it points out infallibly when the weakness lies at home."

"I have heard all this allowed as to necessary articles; such as brandy and sugar, which are never made in England. But I have had many a lecture against buying luxuries anywhere but at home; and really it seems a very small sacrifice to be content with home-made luxuries instead of foreign."

"Those who so lectured you, love, were more intent upon fitting you to be the wife of a Preventive officer, than upon teaching you plain sense. They did not tell you that this is a sort of sacrifice which (like many other arbitrary sacrifices) hurts all parties. They did not point out to you that every purchase of a foreign luxury presupposes something made at home with which the purchase is effected. The French fan you played with so prettily the first time

---



"O, do you remember that fan? that evening?"

"Remember the first ball at which I danced with you, love! It would be strange if I forgot it."

And the Lieutenant lost the thread of his argument for a while.

"Well!" said Matilda, at length; "what clumsy, home-made thing do you think I gave for that fan?"

"*You* probably gave nothing more clumsy than a bright golden guinea, or a flimsy bank-note: but, having got to the bottom of the money exchanges, we should find that some yards of cotton, or a few pairs of scissors had been exchanged for that fan, with a profit to the manufacturer of either article that it might happen to be. Thus, every purchase of a foreign article, be it a necessary or a luxury, presupposes some domestic production for which we thereby obtain a sale."

"And the same must be the case with the French fan-makers. They, or their neighbours, procure cotton gowns or scissors for their wives which they must have paid more for at home. So there is an advantage to each, unless my fan could have been as well made in England."

"In which case, there would have been a fan made instead of so many pairs of scissors; that is all; and you would have been just as well pleased with an English fan."

"Would you?" inquired Matilda, smiling.

"I never saw a fan I liked so well," replied the Lieutenant: "but there is no saying what I might have thought of any other fan under the same circumstances."

"Well, I shall tell Elizabeth, if she lets me into her confidence, that she may come here dressed in French fabrics, without any fear of displeasing you?"

"I shall not take upon myself to be displeased about the matter, while those who have more concern in it than I are not strict. If French silks rustle in the royal presence, and bandanas are flourished by law-makers in full assembly, I do not see why the officers of government should embarrass themselves with scruples. My business is to prevent contraband goods from being landed hereabouts, and not to find out who has the benefit of them when they are once on shore."

This reminded the Lieutenant to look out again, and Matilda remained musing at the fire

for a few moments. It seemed to her that our native manufacturers were very ill-used, being deprived of the stimulus to improvement which is caused by free and fair competition, while they were undersold in their own market, with the connivance of those who mocked them with the semblance of protection. She thought the dwellers on the coast ill-used; their duty to the government being placed, by arbitrary means, in direct opposition to their interests, and their punishment being severe and, from its nature, capricious, in proportion as temptation was made too strong for them. Her husband's shout of "Holloa, there!" to some person without brought her to the window, where she saw against the dim sky the outline of one who appeared motionless and dumb.

It was not for a considerable time that any explanation could be elicited. At last a melancholy, gruff voice said,

"I thought I might chance to see my lady. I was only looking about for my lady."

"And where did you expect to find me, Nicholas?" asked Matilda, looking out over her husband's shoulder. "You may have seen me *sit on yonder gun*, or lean over the fence some-

times ; but I do not choose such an hour or such weather as this."

Nicholas only knew that he could have no rest till he had apologized for not having answered when he was spoken to in the morning. He wished to say that he must not speak while on watch ; but, as to being disrespectful to the lady——"

The lady acquitted him of any such enormity, and would have sent him away happy with the assurance that she did not now conclude him stony-hearted for laughing when Uriah Faa was ducked. The Lieutenant had, however, a word to say to him about the state of things on the beach. No alarm had been given, Nicholas reported, though he would not, for his part, swear that the expected vessel might not be near. He had not seen that vessel, nor any other ; for, as the Lieutenant might have observed, it was too dark to see anything : but he would not swear that it might not be to be seen, if it was now daylight. This being all that could be got out of him, Nicholas was permitted to depart to his rest ; rest which he wanted not a little, for he had lingered about for more than an hour at the close of his watch, in the vague hope of seeing

Matilda, without taking any measures to do so. He stretched his tired limbs before the fire, thinking (though he was nearly a quarter of a mile from the big stone on the beach) that he was a happy man, as everybody was very kind to him.

---

## CHAPTER V.

## MORNING WALKS.

THE next dawn broke bright and clear, to the surprise of every body who was learned in the weather, and greatly to the disappointment of certain parties who had an interest in the continuance of the fog.

On a steep slope among the cliffs of Beachy Head, at the foot of a lofty wall of chalk, and sheltered by it, was collected a party of men, women, and children, who had little appearance of having just risen from their beds. The men, for the most part, were stretched at length, drinking, or looking out languidly to sea. The *two women*, one young, the other middle aged,

and brown, weather-worn, and in sordid apparel, with lank hair hanging about her ears, were smoking, and busying themselves in the feminine employment of making a clearance. That is, they were stowing certain packages in the bottom of huge panniers, destined for the backs of three asses, which were looking up from the beach in vain longing for the inaccessible, scanty herbage of the slope. Two girls, as brown as the elder woman, were amusing themselves with picking up the balls of foam which had been thrown in by the fierce tide, and sending them trembling down the wind. Uriah Faa, in apparent forgetfulness of the disgraces of the preceding day, sat dangling his heels from a projecting piece of the cliff, aiming fragments of chalk at the auks and wills which flapped past him, or swept out to sea in long lines below. One man was seen apart from the group, who did not appear to belong to the place, the persons, or the hour. He stood leaning at the mouth of a cleft in the chalk precipice, sometimes yawning, sometimes buttoning his great coat closer, as the morning breeze passed him, and then glancing up apprehensively at one point after another of the cliffs overhead, as if

he expected to see there the peeping face of a spy. Next, he looked at his watch, and seemed growing so restless and uncomfortable, that the younger of the women took upon herself to comfort him by giving notice that the sloop was expected every moment to arrive for its cargo of chalk, and that all would be safe before the spies could see so far off as a furlong.

"But the division is not made yet," objected the agent. "My bandanas are stowed away with some of Solomon's packages; and you know Alexander makes over to me his venture of ribbons and lace, this time."

"What put that into your head?" growled Alexander, half raising himself, and looking surlily at the agent. "Do you think I have risked running in in a fog, and wrought since midnight, to give over my share to anybody? You may take your chance next time. You'll find the matter well worth staying for."

"But, you know, Alexander, we settled that I was to have the first batch that was landed;—for a consideration, you remember—for a fair consideration. One night suits you as well as another, living on the spot."

"By no means; when one batch is safe ashore, and the other still at sea."

"But consider, I cannot spare two days. They want me at Brighton every hour, and I promised Breme that he should have the goods

—."

Alexander seemed to think that all this was nothing to him, while he had his package safe under his elbow. He applied himself to a fresh dram of Hollands, and appeared to have done listening.

"Try Solomon," advised Mrs. Draper. "He is liberal, and likes to accommodate. He will take the chance of another night, if you make it worth his while."

"Here comes Solomon himself," cried several voices, as a well-known-whistle announced the approach of some one; and Mr. Pim appeared from a side path, (if path it might be called,) his hands crossed behind him, and his merry face shining through the dusk.

"I thought you would take your morning's walk this way," observed Mrs. Draper, as she handed him a mug, and pointed to the right keg.

"It is time we were parting instead of meeting," said Pim. "We shall have a bright morning upon us full soon enough."

"Father," shouted Uriah, "the fog is drawing off, and here is the sloop coming in below"



"Trinity, bring the ass to yon point," cried Mrs. Draper to her little daughter, who was scrambling on all fours up the steepest part of the slope.

"Here, Lussha, my beauty," said old Faa to his grandchild, "help me to fill up the panniers, my bird."

Uriah came to help, and a respectable load of chalk was presently heaped upon the packages in the panniers, which were forthwith carried down, and hung upon the shaggy asses. Old Faa then helped to set each bare-legged child astride on the beasts, and commended them to each other's care. Slowly and surely the animals took their way along the ribbed chalk which here constituted the beach, while the children looked back to hear what Pim was saying to them.

"Trinity Draper, I hope you don't forget your catechism, my child. There is a lady coming to the school in a day or two, and it will be the worse for you if you cannot say your Catechism. Uriah and Lussha, you hear what I say. Remember your catechism."

Their Saturday's train of associations being *awakened* by this warning, the children began

involuntarily to gabble altogether, and their confusion of tongue made itself heard as they wound out of sight, till a stumble of Trinity's steed caused Uriah's gallantry to prevail over his scholarship, and occupied him in belabouring her ass with true gipsy grace and strength.

A pale yellow ray shot up from the horizon full into the cleft, beside which the unshaven and weary agent stood, making his bargain with Pim. This first break of sunshine was a signal not to be neglected. The laziest of the party sprang to their feet, and hastened to deposit their kegs and bales under the chalk which formed the apparent cargo of the sloop that pitched below in the light grey waters. As the fog disclosed more and more of the expanse, two or three of the men fixed their glasses from behind different projections, anxious to be assured that the lugger, which had approached under cover of the darkness, was scudding away before the light. She was just visible when the whole horizon became clear, making all speed towards her native coast. Though there was reason to hope that all was safe, as far as she was concerned, there was danger that the smuggling party might be surprised by the apparition of the revenue cutter

from the east or the west, before all needful precautions were taken; and there was a prodigious stir among the more active and the more timid of the party. Within half an hour the fire was put out, and the embers scattered to the winds; the men wandered off in different directions, and nobody remained amidst the wild scene but Mr. Pim, who looked about him and whistled to the sea-birds, and Mrs. Draper, who lingered behind the rest of the gipsy party, to seek satisfaction to her maternal and friendly solitudes about the progress of her child and the Faas at the school.

By dint of many questions, she learned that the young people were likely to be excellent Christians, as they were very ready at the Bible; highly moral, as they were always whipped when they did wrong; as patriotic as if they had not belonged to a foreign tribe, since they lost no opportunity of insulting the Preventive men; and finally, very scholastic, as they had learned to sit still by the half hour together, which had at first appeared a point impossible of achievement. The mother's heart was so elated with this report, and Pim found it so much *pleasanter* to walk and whistle in the wintry

---

sunshine than to play the pedagogue, that the discourse was prolonged far beyond the hour when his duties ought to begin ; he comforting himself with the assurance that Rebecca would take care that the little things had something to do.

In the midst of his holiday mood, he was disturbed by a voice calling him from overhead, and, looking up, he perceived Rebecca herself, earnestly gesticulating at the summit of the cliff. She shouted, she beckoned, incessantly, and seemed in such a fever of impatience that her father concluded that some disaster must have happened.

"Hi, hi, Beck!" resounded his mighty voice, in answer, from the face of the cliff, as he began to scramble up the track by which he had descended. "What, is the house on fire, girl, or do the spies want to get hold of me?" he asked, with prodigious tranquillity; "or," and at the thought he quickened his scramble into a kind of kangaroo leap, "or has any harm come to some of the brats?"

"The ladies are come! the ladies! and nobody at home but I and the dame," cried Rebecca; and her news seemed to be received

with nearly as much vexation by her father as it was related with agony by herself.

"They will dodge the brats, and put them out," he growled in his deepest tone: "after all the pains I meant to take to-day, the little things will be out in their Bibles, though they can say it all with me. The Faas and Draper will not be there, however; only the soberer sort of children."

He was mistaken. The gipsy pupils were present with the rest, and formed a part of the class which Matilda had collected around her, and whom she was now engaged in examining.

"Think of your running away yourself!" muttered Pim to his daughter. "Why could not you have sent the dame? There would have been no harm in her knowing where I was."

"She would hardly have hobbled there and back before dinner," replied Rebecca. "We have been very quick, and the ladies can't have got far."

They had got far enough to see that though the children had (in their own phrase) "got into the Bible," they had not (to use their master's) "got through it" with the understanding

whether or not they had with the tongue. The children Matilda was conversing with were all between ten and fifteen years of age, and therefore capable of giving intelligent answers about the patriarchal tale they had been reading, if about any part of the Bible whatever.

"What did they do next," she asked, "after determining where they should settle?"

"They pitched their tents before it grew dark."

"Do you know how a tent is pitched?"

"Yes, my lady; it is daubed all over with tar."

Uriah Faa, well-informed on this matter, set the mistake right.

"When they saluted each other, what did they do? What is it to salute?"

"They scolded each other right well."

"If they had wished to scold one another, there would hardly have been such handsome presents given;—so many sheep and oxen, and asses and camels. What is a camel?"

"A sow."

"But they *had* been angry with one another," observed a child.

"Yes; but they were now going to be friends,

though they thought each other in fault. Should we be sorry or angry when others are in fault?"

' Angry.'

' Why?'

" Because they have no business to do wrong."

" And if others are angry with us, what should we do?"

" Give them as good as they bring."

Matilda began now to despair of the much-vaunted morals of Mr. Pim's pupils; but, to give them a fair trial, she turned to the New Testament, and questioned them about a story that their master allowed they knew perfectly well.

" When the Apostle had neither silver nor gold, what did he give to the lame man?"

" Halfpence."

The explanation on the subject of halfpence led to a commentary on the story of the poor widow, and her gift to the treasury.

" Now, little boy," said Matilda to one of the youngest, who had been playing stealthily with the end of her fur tippet, " what was the widow's mite? What is a mite?"

" A flea."

" He knows most about the Old Testament, *observed* his master, anxious to shift his ground *again*.

"Yes," replied Matilda, "he told me about Esau and Jacob, and the mess of pottage. What is a mess, children?"

"Ashes,"—"Dirt,"—"Rubbish,"—cried they.

"And what is pottage?"

"Sheep's head and taters."

Matilda thought she would try them with the Commandments. "Is it right to covet?"

"Yes."

"Why so?"

"Because it makes us comfortable to have things."

As a last experiment, she turned back to the first page of the Bible, and found they could tell that the world was made in six days; upon hearing which Mr. Pim began to rally his spirits.

"What were the two great lights which were made to rule the day and the night?"

"Dungeness and the North Foreland."

Matilda rose, and the schoolmaster put the class to flight in a trice, with a box on the ear to one, a shake to a second, and a kick to a third. Matilda's remonstrances were lost amidst the tumult of shrieks and yells which now arose. At the first moment that Pim could spare from correcting his pupils, he informed the lady that



they had got on badly lately from the impossibility of getting the parents to send them regularly. When there was any work in hand, some-way up the beach——

“Towards Birling Gap,” suggested Matilda. “But that sort of work is done in the night, is it not?”

“Yes; but the little things have enough to do the next day in making a clearance; and, at such times, up they start, and away, the first minute I turn my back.”

“You turn your back to go after the same business, I am afraid, Mr. Pim. If you like whistling among the cliffs, and driving bargains in the clefts better than keeping to your desk, how can you expect the children not to take the liberty of indulging the same taste when you give them opportunity?”

Mr. Pim looked about him to ascertain what o'clock it was, and would fain have made out that it was time for the children to go home; but Mrs. Storey would not let him off so easily. She convinced him that it was not yet eleven, and declared that she wished far more to see how matters ordinarily went on than to usurp the *office of interrogator*. When the children had

recovered their spirits, and their master his composure, business was resumed ; and Matilda was as much surprised at the cleverness with which some things were taught as she had been shocked at the deficiencies of the kind of learning in which Mr. Pim was the least versed. She now envied him his power over the children's minds, and the effect which he knew how to produce by a timely joke, or a familiar illustration, or an appeal to facts with which his pupils were already familiar. She only wished that he would pique himself rather less upon his morals while making the very most of the opposition of interests in the society about him. He could not speak of any virtue without pointing out that his friends had it, and the Preventive men not ; and, even in the presence of the Lieutenant's wife, it seemed difficult to restrain the expressions of hatred which were on the lips of him who taught and of those who answered.

The ladies did not leave the school till it was emptied of the children, whom they followed, to see how some dropped into their several homes, and whither others betook themselves. The last who was left to trip along by herself was Trinity

Draper, who cast a glance behind her at almost every step, as if not liking to have her return accompanied by strangers. They had no intention, however, of losing sight of her, as they were disposed for a walk, and found their curiosity excited by the mingled barbarism and civilization in the air of the children of this wandering tribe.

They began, after a time, to suspect that the little girl did not mean to let them see her place of abode, so manifold were her turns and windings from the beach to the fields, and then upon the downs, and again to the beach. When she had led them through a long circuit, she finally struck up the country, and proceeded towards an unfrequented hollow way, where high banks excluded the view on either side, a rugged soil wearied the feet of the walker, and nothing was to be seen at the end of the lane but the grey sea, at the moment undiversified by a single sail.

"I wonder you are not afraid to set foot in this dreary place, so alarmed as you were by these very people yesterday," observed Matilda to her companion, as they arrived in sight of a gipsy tent, spread on a patch of grass under *shelter of the eastern bank*. "I have been

speculating all the way on when you would propose to turn back.

Elizabeth replied that she had visited the encampment before, without fear, knowing that the men were absent at this time of day, and that there was nothing to fear from the women and children.

"They assemble at meal times, I fancy," replied Mrs. Storey; "and there is the smoke of their cookery, you see."

The thin blue smoke was curling up around the trunk of a tree, in the hollow formed by whose roots was kindled the fire, which Trinity now hastened to feed with sticks from the hedges. She peeped into the pot, which steamed from under the three poles that supported it, and proceeded to stir the mess with a forked stick, affording glimpses to her visitors of a sort of meat whose shape and colour were new to them. On their inquiring what the stew was made of, Trinity pointed to a skin which lay in the ditch, and which was undeniably that of a brown dog. Matilda expressed her horror, and the child looked up surprised, observing,

"Baba says the same hand made the dog and the sheep."

"Who is Baba?"

"Her father," replied Elizabeth. "Baba means Father. Where did you get this dog, Trinity? I hope it is not stolen."

Trinity believed Uriah had found it under the hedge. She took up the head, which was left with the skin, and showed by the teeth that the animal must have been very old.

"Dear me! I suppose you pick up all the dead animals that lie about the country," cried Elizabeth.

"Beebe says that beasts that have died by the hand of God are better than those that have died by the hand of man," replied Trinity.

A low moan issued from the tent at this moment, which seemed to strike the child with surprise and terror: she sprang upon her feet, and looked eagerly towards the curtain which hung over the entrance, but did not venture to go in. When Matilda inquired if any one within was sick, the girl shook her head, replying,

"No sickness, but there must be death. That is the death moan."

Mrs. Storey instantly proceeded to the tent, thinking that assistance might be wanted; and, *lifting up* the awning, she saw Mrs. Draper

standing beside the body of a very old woman, which was propped up in a sitting posture, and composed in attitude and countenance. Mrs. Draper's countenance was also calm, as she folded her arms in her red cloak, and rocked herself backwards and forwards, giving the death moan at intervals. After a certain number of repetitions, she turned to the ladies, and, in a voice of indifference, asked their business, glancing with a smile towards their palms. Elizabeth did not seem to share Matilda's surprise at this transition from one mood to another, but returned Mrs. Draper's smile, not ungloving her hand, but pointing out divers blemishes in the gloves she wore, and remarking,

"What shocking gloves these are! I used to get beauties of gloves at Brighton. I wish I could get such here."

"We are only carriers," observed the gipsy. "You must walk a mile eastward to find a batman's wife."

And she pointed significantly in the direction of Alexander's cottage. Elizabeth insinuated that carriers might be paid for their services in goods as well as the bat or bludgeon men, whose office it was to fight the battles of the

smugglers while contraband goods were being landed and distributed. It appeared, however, that the gipsies preferred having their pay in money to loading themselves with more incumbrances than were necessary. It was plain that Elizabeth must apply elsewhere for gloves.

Matilda was meanwhile trying to tempt Trinity into the abode, in order to learn from her some particulars about the deceased, whose departure seemed to be borne by Mrs. Draper with such extraordinary composure : but Trinity still shrank from the sight of the dead, though willing enough to tell all she knew of her. She could only relate that this woman had been with the gang as long as Trinity could remember anything; that she had been blind all that time ; and had been carried from place to place on a donkey, which was always led by the most careful person in the company. She had outlived all her relations, and had been tended by the Faas and Drapers only because there was no one else to take care of her. All her days had been spent in wandering, Trinity believed, as she had heard her say that it was seventy years since she had slept in a bed. It did not appear that her death *had been immediately expected*, as the men of

the gang who were engaged as carriers, the preceding night, were gone to Brighton, and some other places a little way up the country; and when Trinity went to school that morning, she had left the old dame making cabbage nets, as usual. Mrs. Draper here took up an unfinished net, and said that it had dropped from the hands of the old woman half an hour before, when the fainting fit came on in which she had died. It was rather a pity, Mrs. Draper observed, that the departure had been so sudden, as the wake of the first night could scarcely be as honourable as they could wish. They must do their best to collect a multitude of mourners by the second night. Meanwhile, Trinity must summon as many of the tribe as were within reach; and if the ladies would please to walk out of the tent, she would fasten down the curtain so that nobody could get in, and set the dog to watch while she went her ways.

It struck Matilda as rather strange to leave the body unguarded by human care at midday, in order to provide for its being watched at night by ten times as many persons as were necessary. There was nothing to be done, however, but to obey the gipsy's desire, as it was plain



that the greatest offence that could be offered would be to propose to touch or to remain near the body.

As they bent their heads under the low hoop which supported the curtain at the entrance, Elizabeth foolishly remarked that it was very well the poor soul had not had a long illness in such a comfortless place.

"You that live in ceiled houses," replied Mrs. Draper, haughtily, "dwell as your fathers dwelt. So do we."

"But being ill and dying,—that is so different!"

"If we are content to die as our fathers died, who forbids?" persisted the gipsy, in a tone which silenced the objector. Mrs. Draper slightly returned the farewell of her visitors, and stood watching them till they were nearly out of sight, when she fastened the dog to one of the hoops of the tent, took off the stew, threw water on the fire, and climbed the bank, in order to pursue her way over the down in an opposite direction from that along which Trinity was tripping.

Very different was the picture presented by *the domestic establishment* of the Alexanders,

whom Elizabeth would not be restrained from visiting in search of gloves, and with the hope of seeing many things besides which might delight her eyes, if her purse would not extend to the purchase of them. Matilda positively refused to accompany her, and walked on to pay a visit to her mother-in-law.

Mrs. Alexander was engaged with her young folks in tying the claws of the lobsters which had been caught that morning; a work requiring some dexterity, and assisted with some fear by the children, who were apt to start and let go at the critical moment, if the creature showed any disposition to friskiness. A technical question or two from Elizabeth sufficed to induce Mrs. Alexander to quit her task, wash her hands, and show her visiter into a light closet at the back of the cottage, where she promised to join her in a few minutes. Where she went Elizabeth had no idea; but she returned in ten minutes with an apron full of mysteries, and followed by two of her boys, bearing between them a package which was almost too large to be brought in at the narrow door. A girl was already seated on the outer door-sill, to give notice of the approach of any spy; and the

eldest boy was directed to keep guard at the entrance of the closet, while apparently busy in carving his wooden boat of three inches long.

Mrs. Alexander intimated that besides gloves, she had an unusual choice of cambrics and silks, and a few pieces of valuable lace, out of which the lady might suit herself, if she chose, before the goods were sent up the country, as they were to be without delay. Elizabeth would not promise to buy, but, of course, accepted the invitation to examine; and then what tempting treasures were spread before her eyes!

"O lovely!" she cried. "What a colour! I wonder whether it would wear well. So delicate! so rich! There is nothing like those French for colours."

Mrs. Alexander, as in gratitude bound, joined in lauding the Lyons manufacturers, and their dyers.

"The hue is most beautiful, to be sure, but the fabric of this is better;—and this,—and this," she continued, applying the scientific touch to each in turn. "It seems to me that all the pieces of that one pattern,—the olive green, and the blue, and the violet,—are of a poorer fabric *than the rest*. But the figure is completely *French*, to be sure."

Mrs. Alexander observed that the Brighton ladies, and some at Hastings, had taken a great fancy to that particular pattern ; and it was selling rapidly at some of the principal shops.

“ Well, now, if I had seen those pieces at a shop,—if I had met with them anywhere but here, I should have pronounced them English. It is very odd that all of that one figure should have less substance than the others. Did they come over as part of the same cargo ?”

“ Stowed cheek-by-jowl in the hold of the lugger that was but six hours out of sight,” Mrs. Alexander declared.

“ I suppose they have been only just landed,” observed Elizabeth, “ for you would not keep such a stock as this by you, with so many enemies about. I wonder you are not afraid.”

“ It is only for a few hours, ma’am ; just till the carriers come back from their present errand. I do not sell in any but a chance way, as you know, ma’am ; and ——”

“ I always supposed your husband had been a batman, and I am told the batmen are often paid in goods,” interrupted Elizabeth.

“ In part, ma’am ; but the greater portion of what is before you is here only on trust. We

take care to keep them out of sight of the few whose business it is to ruin the coast ; but, for that matter, the hands that served to land and stow ten times as much as all this, are enough to defend what is left. But the carriers will be back soon, and then ——”

“ And then they will have something else to do than to set off for Brighton again immediately,—if you mean the gipsies.” And Elizabeth explained that they would have to attend the wake of the old woman, for two or three nights together.


This was such important news that Mrs. Alexander instantly sent one of the children in search of his father, and seemed now careless as to whether her visiter made a purchase or not. After selecting a package of gloves which was too large for her pocket, and was therefore to be left behind till a favourable opportunity should occur of conveying them unseen, Elizabeth detained a two-inch pattern of the silk whose figure she most admired, and which was somewhat cheaper than the rest, from the inferiority of its quality. She must consult her mother, she declared, and should probably send an order for a quantity sufficient for two or three dresses. Her *desire to obtain some of the benefits of this im-*

portation was enhanced by the woman's apparent indifference as to whether she indulged in a purchase. She resolved to make all speed homewards, and to persuade her mother, and, if possible, Matilda, to seize the opportunity of decking themselves in contraband fabrics.

She was not destined to arrive at home so soon as she imagined. Instead of Elizabeth, appeared a neighbour's child, breathless and excited, to request Matilda's immediate presence at a well-known house on the beach, and to urge the Lieutenant being sent for with all speed. It was plain that Elizabeth had been stopped by the Coast Guard, and conveyed by them to the house of the dame appointed to search all women who were suspected of having smuggled goods concealed about them. This was an act of audacity on the part of the guard that Matilda could not have anticipated, or she would have used more urgent persuasions with her sister-in-law against connecting herself in any way with the secret proceedings of the people about her. She was little aware that the adventure arose out of the reprobation of Brady's punishment of the gipsy-boy, which she and Elizabeth had testified the day before.

Brady had seen Miss Storey enter the suspected house of Alexander; he had remarked signs of movement within and about it during her stay; and had watched her leaving it with a hurried step on the way home. Brady did not see why a lady should make a mockery of his office any more than a poor woman, to whom the temptation was greater; and he was quite disposed to use his authority against one who had blamed him when he could not defend himself, and exposed him to be mobbed. He therefore planted himself directly in her path, on the beach, and requested her to deliver up the contraband articles which she was carrying about her.

The consciousness of what had just passed at Mrs. Alexander's deprived Elizabeth of the sense of innocence, and of that appearance of it which she might have justified by the fact that she had no smuggled goods about her person. She instantly thought of the pattern of silk, and tried to hide it, in a way which confirmed the suspicions of the foe. There was nothing for it but to go to the place appointed; but, on the way, she bethought herself of sending a messenger for some of her family. She appeared in so



great tribulation when Matilda arrived, as to leave little doubt of her being actually in the scrape ; and delay or evasion seemed therefore the best policy.

"Have you demanded to be taken before a magistrate?" asked Matilda.

"A magistrate! La, no! How dreadful to think of going to a justice! I dare not, I am sure. 'Tis dreadful to think of."

"Not so dreadful as to put up with such a piece of audacity as this. If I were you, I would give these people as much trouble as possible in the business they have brought upon themselves, and make them heartily sick of it before they have done."

"Better not make such a fuss, and expose one's-self before all the folks on the way: better take it quietly," said the search-woman, holding open the door of the inner room appointed for the process. Elizabeth peeped into the room, and then looked at Matilda in restless dismay, declaring that she had nothing about her that she would not have produced in a moment to the guard, if he had asked her quietly, instead of bringing half the population about her heels.

"Then go to the magistrate, and tell him so,"



said Mrs. Storey, authoritatively. "It is a privilege which the law allows you ; and an innocent person does wrong in not claiming it."

Elizabeth could not bring herself thus to oblige Brady to declare what reasons he had to suspect her. She doubted and hesitated, till her foes could and would wait no longer. She was searched, and nothing found, except, at the last moment, the pattern of silk, squeezed up in her glove. This discovery was very discomfiting to the ladies, and was made the most of by Brady, who held it up in the face of the Lieutenant, when that gentleman arrived, breathless, to ascertain what disaster had befallen the ladies of his family.

"What! is that all you have got? I wish you joy of your share of the seizure," said he to Brady, pushing his hand aside. "I hope you will make more sure of your game the next time you abuse your duty to insult a lady."

Brady said he should discharge his office, let who would be the sufferer ; and added, that he held in his hand what was a sufficient justification. He then proceeded to deposit the two *inches* of silk carefully in his tobacco-box.

"Let me look at it," demanded the Lieuten-

ant. Brady glanced towards the fire, as if fearing that that was destined to be the next place of deposit for his precious snip. The Lieutenant laughed contemptuously, and walked to the farthest possible distance from the fire, still holding out his hand for the pattern.

“Why, man,” said the officer, “you had better make haste to qualify yourself a little better for your business, or you will make yourself the laughing-stock of the place. This silk is no more French than your coat is Chinese. Here, take it back, and ask any knowing person you please, and you will find this was woven in Spitalfields or at Macclesfield.”

Brady muttered something about “humbug;” and the search-woman became extremely anxious to explain that it was no part of her business to choose her victims: she had only to discharge her duty upon all who were brought to her. The Lieutenant silenced her by pushing past her, with his wife and sister on each arm. The little crowd opened before them as they re-issued from the house, and closed again round Brady, to learn the result of his loyal enterprise. He was in too thorough an ill-humour to give them any satisfaction, anticipating (what, in fact,

proved his fate) that he should be twitted with this deed for months to come, by every man, woman, and child who did not bear a due patriotic affection towards the Preventive Service.

The officer did not speak till it was time to deposit his sister at her own door.

"Now, Elizabeth," said he, "I hope this will prove a lesson to you. You and my mother came to live here on my account, and on my account you must go away again, unless you can bring your practices into agreement with my duties. It is a lucky chance for you that that rag is of English make, or ——"

"Oh, brother! do you really think it is not a French silk?"

"To be sure, or I should not have said so," replied the Lieutenant, with much displeasure in his tone. "If I chose to tell lies to screen you, you might stay here, following your own fancies, till doomsday. It is because I always will speak the truth about those who belong to me that I request you to go away, if you must do things which make the truth painful for you to hear and for me to tell."

"Well, my good sir, do not be in a passion. *I only thought you were telling a convenient*

fib, such as everybody tells about such matters, in the Custom-house and out of it."

"Not everybody, as you now find," replied the officer; "and I hope this is the last time you will expose me to the suspicion of fibbing in your behalf."

Matilda half withdrew her arm from her husband's, terrified at a mode and strength of rebuke which would have almost annihilated her; but Elizabeth bore it with wonderful indifference, wishing him good morning, as on ordinary days.

"She is a good creature," the Lieutenant observed, in his customary phrase, after walking on a few paces in silence. "She is a good creature, but monstrously provoking sometimes. A pretty scrape she had nearly got herself and all of us into."

"Remember how lately it was that you were defending the desire for foreign commodities in general, and Elizabeth's in particular," observed Matilda.

"Well! all that I said was very true, I believe," replied the officer, half laughing under a sense of his own inconsistency. "I have as firm a faith as ever in the truth of what I then said."

"Your doctrine, then, is, that Elizabeth is right in having the desire, and in gratifying it; but that she is wrong in being caught in the fact."

"Why, it does come pretty nearly to that, I am afraid. It comes to the fact that duties clash in a case like this; so that, one's conscience being at fault, an appeal to the law must settle the matter. I see no crime in Elizabeth's taste, apart from the means she may take to gratify it; but the law pronounces her wrong, so we must conclude she is wrong."

"Duties do, indeed, clash," replied Matilda; "and if so painfully in one case, what must be the extent of the evil if we consider all who are concerned? Even in this little neighbourhood, here is Mr. Pim unable to teach honour, as he says, without giving the notion that it is a merit to conceal fraud, and pointing out a whole class as objects of contempt and hatred. The dwellers near, almost to a man, look upon the government as a tyrant, its servants as oppressors, its laws as made to be evaded, and its powers defied. Oaths are regarded as mere humbug; and the kindest of social feelings are nourished in direct relation to fraud, and pleaded as its

sanction. There is not a man near us who does not feel it necessary, nor a woman who does not praise it as virtuous, nor a child who is not trained up in the love and practice of it. This is the morality which one institution teaches from village to village, all along our shores,—mocking the clergyman, setting at nought the schoolmaster, and raising up a host of enemies to the government by which it is maintained; and all for what?"

"To help us in our national money matters, in which, in truth, it does not very well succeed," observed the Lieutenant.

"And to protect the interests of certain classes of its subjects," replied Matilda, "in which, if most people say true, they succeed as little."

"Spitalfields is in a worse state than ever," observed the Lieutenant; "and there are terrible complaints from our glovers and our lace-makers."

"And if not," continued Matilda—"if protection availed to these people, the case would be very little better than it is now. Money prosperity is desirable only as it is necessary to some higher good,—to good morals and happi-

ness ; and if it were, in fact, secured to our glovers, and silkmen, and lace-makers, it would be purchased far too dear at the expense of the morals of such a multitude as are corrupted by our restrictive laws. There can be nothing in the nature of things to make the vexation and demoralization of some thousands necessary to the prosperity of other thousands. Providence cannot have appointed to governments such a choice of evils as this ; and——”

“ And you, my dear, for your share, will therefore withhold your allegiance from a government which attempts to institute such an opposition.”

“ It is rather too late an age of the world for me to turn rebel on that ground,” replied Matilda, smiling. “ Such governments as we were speaking of are dead and gone, long ago. Our government is not granting any new protections or prohibitions, surely !”

“ But I thought you would quarrel with it for not taking away those which exist. I thought you would give it your best blessing if they sent an order to all us Preventive people to vacate our station-houses and march off.”

“ I certainly felt more disaffected to-day than *ever in my life before*,” observed Matilda. “ To

think that, in a country like this, anybody may be stopped and searched upon mere suspicion !”

“ With the privilege of demanding the decision of a magistrate, remember.”

“ Which magistrate may order the search, if he finds sufficient ground of suspicion. And this outrage is to take place as a very small part of the machinery for protecting the interests of certain classes, to the great injury of all the rest ; and especially, as many of themselves say, to their own. It makes one indignant to think of it.”

“ It is the law, my love ; and while it exists, it must be obeyed. I must order my men to stop you, if you should chance to sympathize in Elizabeth’s tastes. Hey, Matilda ?”

“ Do, by all means, when you find me smuggling ; but perhaps my share of the temptation may soon be at an end. I trust all this distress that you speak of will end in bringing into an active competition with foreigners those of our people who are now sitting with their hands before them, perceiving how the gentry of England are apparelled in smuggled goods. No fear for our occupation, you know. There will still be brandy and tobacco, on which, as we do



not grow them ourselves, government will call for so high a duty as will encourage smuggling. No prospect of your being useless yet a while."

"Nor of our neighbours being as loyal as you would have them."

"Nor of their living at peace, and in frank honesty."

"Nor of Pim's making his scholars moral."

"Nor of our manufacturers having fair play."

"Nor of the same justice being done to the revenue. Alas! how far we are from perfection!"

"Yet ever tending towards it. Unless we believe this, what do we mean by believing in a Providence! since all evidence goes to prove that its rule is infinite progression. Yes, we are tending upwards, though slowly; and we shall find, when we arrive in sight of comparative perfection, that a system of restriction which debases and otherwise injures all parties concerned, is perfectly inconsistent with good government."

"Then shall I have earned my dinner in some other, and, I trust, a pleasanter, way than to-day," observed the Lieutenant. "I shall never *get reconciled* to my office, Matilda, especially *while I hear of brother officers abroad*——"

“ Oh ! you are dreading your patrol to-night, because it is beginning to snow,” said Matilda, smiling. “ You shall go in, and fortify yourself with some duty-paid brandy and untaxed water ; and then, if you will let me go with you again, we will defy the smugglers as manfully as if they were to be the enemies of good order for evermore.”


“ You shall not go out in the dark again, my love. It took all my manfulness from me to see you so near the edge of the cliff in a wind which might drive you out as if you were a sea-gull. The place looks scarcely fit for you on the brightest of days ; you have no chance out of doors on a gusty night.”

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### A NIGHT WATCH.

THE night of the gipsy late-wake was one of the clearest and coldest moonlight. Such a night,—when the smallest skiff showed black on the glistening sea, and every sailing bird cast its



shadow on the chalky cliff, and each stationary figure on the heights exhibited a hard outline against the sky,—was little fit for smuggling adventure ; yet the officers of the Coast Guard had a strong impression that a landing of contraband goods was to be attempted, in defiance of the lady moon, and of the watchers who “blessed her useful light.” A gipsy festival afforded an excellent pretence for collecting the country people in sufficient force to brave the guard ; and it was suspected that the people themselves thought so, as tidings of the festival were most industriously spread through all the country, and certainly very eagerly received. Lieutenant Storey held consultations with his brother officers at all the stations near ; and every precaution was taken to enable a great force to assemble with speed at the points where it seemed pretty certain that a landing would be attempted. One or two trusty men were sent to overlook the wake from a height, that they might report the numbers and apparent disposition of the people ; and Lieutenant Storey visited these men on their posts soon after the beginning of the ceremony.

“ Well ! what news ? ” said Matilda, anxious-

ly, as the Lieutenant entered the room where his wife, mother, and sister were waiting supper for him.

"Why, it is a fine freezing night," he replied, rubbing his hands, and accepting the seat which was offered him close by the blazing fire. "So you have Elizabeth to keep you company, as I advised you. That is very well, as I rather think you will not be persuaded to go to bed till late. And you, too, mother! Who would have thought of your climbing up to us so late in the day?"

"But the gipsies!" cried the ladies. "Did you see the wake?"

"I heard more than I saw of it; for the banks are so high that one could only catch a glimpse of a few heads now and then. But there was a strong glare from their torches, there being little moonlight, I suppose, in the hollow way: and their noise is really inconceivable. Such yelling and howling, and what I suppose they call singing! They will wake up all the sheep in the pens for a mile round."

"I am afraid there are a great many collected," observed Matilda.

"I should think there must be, for I never

heard any gabble or din to compare with it, except when the wind and the sails are wrangling in a storm at sea. But come, let us have supper. I must be gone again presently; and this is not an air to take away one's appetite."

His mother inquired whether they could learn anything of the progress of events by looking out of the windows, or whether they must wait for news till his return. He replied,

"You will see nothing by going to the window but as fine a moonlight sea as ever you saw; and the light-house, and perhaps poor Nicholas staring about him, as he is bound to do. If there is any affray, it will be far out of your sight. We keep our eyes upon Birling and Crowlink Gap. Either of them is an easy place of rendezvous from the wake. You will be as still as death here, and I advise you all to go to sleep till I knock you up to let me in."

The mother and sister wondered what he thought they could be made of to go to bed at such a time. Matilda piled fresh logs on the fire, and looked to see that the lamp was trimmed.

"I'll tell you what,—I'll desire Nicholas to *come, from time to time*, to tell you whether he

hears or sees anything or nothing," said the Lieutenant. "I have put him on the nearest beat, where I am pretty sure of his having nothing to do; and he can just step to the gate, if you like to be at the trouble of hearing that he has nothing to tell."

"Do be less presumptuous, my dear son," said Mrs. Storey. "How dare you make sure of nothing happening?"

"It was only a hasty word, mother. I have not been presumptuous in reality, as you would say if you saw how completely we are prepared. More ale, if you please, Elizabeth. And now, I must not stay any longer. I shall be sure to tell Nicholas: but you will not detain him from his post."

Matilda ran out before him to have his parting kiss at the gate, and to watch him out of sight. The full light from the beacon turned at the moment upon her face, stronger than the moonlight, and showed that tears were upon her cheek.

"I cannot scold you, love," said her husband, as he wiped them away. "I do pity you women that have to sit waiting at home when anything is to happen. I could fancy myself cry-

ing like a baby if I were obliged to do so. But go in now, there's a good girl."

"The moment you are out of sight. I suppose you really cannot tell,—you cannot even tell *me*,—when you are likely to be home again."

"Impossible. It may be two hours, or it may be twelve."

Matilda had only to pray that it might be two, while she watched her husband on his way to Nicholas's beat, where he stopped to speak with the figure perched upon the brow of the cliff. Presently the figure might be seen to touch its hat; the Lieutenant waved his hand towards the station-house, and speedily disappeared, leaving Matilda to re-enter the parlour, whose clear fire, double windows, and listed doors she would willingly have exchanged for the biting air on Hotcombe Flat, by her husband's side.

During the hour which elapsed before Nicholas lifted the latch of the gate, whose welcome slick brought all the ladies to the door, Matilda had wished twenty times that she was alone. Elizabeth was full of groundless fears of her own devising, while she ridiculed those of other people; and Mrs. Storey gave a lecture on patience

every time Matilda moved on her chair, looking up in her face with all possible anxiety, however, at each return from an excursion to the upper windows. The methodical Nicholas was more tiresome still. He began with an explanation of what his orders were about giving intelligence to the ladies, and of his purpose in now appearing before them. He proceeded with an account of where he had stood, and how he had looked round and listened, and what he had been thinking about ; and it was only at the last that it came out that he had seen and heard nothing particular.

“ And do you think you could hear a pistol-shot from Birling Gap, or from so far as Crowlink Gap ? ”

Nicholas could not answer for it, having never heard a pistol fired from either place while on duty on his present beat ; but he soon recollected that his officer had told him that it was a very calm night, and that he could certainly be able to hear the sound in question from the farthest of the Seven Sisters ; and therefore Nicholas fully believed that he should hear a pistol as soon as fired.

“ Very well,” said Matilda, venturing upon



such a breach of discipline as handing him a glass of ale. "Now we will not detain you : we were desired not ; but come again in an hour, and sooner, if anything happens."

Nicholas's heart, which was always warm towards the lady, was rarefied by the honors and benefits of this night. To be appointed, in some sort, her special servant,—to be treated with kind words from her lips, and with ale from her own hands,—was enough, in combination with the ale itself, to raise his spirits to the highest pitch of which, as a sober man, he was capable. He could scarcely refrain from whistling as he went back to his beat, and was actually guilty of humming "Rules Britannia" as he flung himself down in a sort of niche on the very brow of the dizzy cliff, whence he was wont to gaze abroad over the expanse.

" ' Rule, Britannia ! '—Ay, that lady is worth a thousand of the bigger and smarter one, and the old one too, if a poor man may think so.— ' Britannia rule the waves.'—Hoy, hoy ! where did this sloop come from, that I did not see her before ? She's waiting for an early cargo of chalk, I'll be bound ; but it is odd I did not see her before, only that she lies so close under, one

could not see without looking over. 'And come again in an hour,' says she, 'or sooner, if anything happens. I wonder how the hour goes. —' Britons never shall be slaves!' — If I had my mother's old watch, now! bless her! she's now asleep, I suppose, in the bed with the green checked curtains. She says she thinks of me in her prayers, and has all the sea before her as she goes to sleep, and me marching above it, helping to guard the nation. — 'Britannia rule the waves!' — It is only a fair turn for me to think of her when she is asleep, as I hope she is now. Lord! how she used to beat me! and all, as she says now, for tenderness, to make a great man of me. To be sure, I never guessed it at the time. — 'Britons never shall be slaves! Never! never!' I don't know that I had not best walk; it is so different sitting here from what it is when the sun is out, plaiting straw for my hat. It is time I had a new hat; I thought I saw the lady glancing at it. Think of her taking notice of such little things! Kind heart! 'Come again within the hour,' says she, 'and sooner, if anything happens.' That's she looking out, I warrant, where there is a little bit of light from the window. There! 'tis gone. 'Tis the will of

Providence that she should notice me so. I wish she knew how my mother thinks of me : but that is no doing of mine, either ; it is the will of Providence too ; and I doubt whether anybody is so happy as, by the will of Providence, I am, with my mother, and the people here all so harmless to me, and the lady ! And it is something to see such a bright sea as this, so like what I saw in the show-box at Weyhill fair, when my mother treated me, then a young boy. I am sure everybody is wonderfully kind to me. I wonder how the hour goes. It is bitter cold, to be sure ; and I think yon bit of shelter is best, after all.—‘ Britons never, ne - - - ver \_\_\_\_\_ , ’ ”

And Nicholas once more crouched in his recess, where he rocked himself to the music of the waves, and looked in vain over the wide expanse for the smallest dark speck, in watching which he might find occupation. He soon found that his observation would have been better bestowed nearer home. While walking, he had disdained the well-worn path along the chalk line, strewed within a few feet of the verge for *the* guidance of the watchers on dark nights. *As it was* light enough for safety, he availed him-

self of the opportunity of varying his beat, and trod the less bare path from the chalk line to the very edge of the cliff. He had looked straight before him, whether his back was turned north or south, giving no attention to the right hand or the left. He had also been too hasty in his conclusion that the vessel which lay below, in the deep, broad shadow of the cliffs, was a chalk sloop, waiting for the tide.

By leaning forwards a little, any one in Nicholas's present seat could command a view of a winding and perilous, almost perpendicular, track, which ascended from the spot where the gipsies had assisted at the last unloading of a smuggling vessel. Something like rude steps occurred at small intervals in this track ; but they were so imperfect, and it was so steep, that the assistance of either ropes or mutual support was necessary to those who would mount, with or without a load on their shoulders. As the tide had till now been too high to permit access to this spot by the beach, it was one of the last in which Nicholas could have expected to see foes. For want of something to do, he picked two or three flints out of a layer which was bedded in the chalk within reach, and amused him-

self with sending them down the steep, in order to watch what course they would take. Leaning over, to follow with his eye the vagaries of one of these, his ear was struck by a bumping, dead sound, which could not be caused by his flint. Looking a little to the right, without drawing back, he perceived something moving in the shadowy track. But for the sound which had excited his suspicions, he would have concluded that some cliff-raven or sea-bird had been disturbed in its hole, and he watched intently for a few seconds to discover whether this was not the case ; but it soon became evident to his sharpened sight that there was a line of men laboriously climbing the track, each with his two small tubs braced upon his shoulders. Whether they had a strong rope by which each might help himself, or whether each supported the one above him, could not be discovered from the distance at which Nicholas sat ; nor could he guess whether they were aware of his being so near.

He started up, and stood in the broad moonlight, fumbling for his pistol, which was not quite so ready to his hand as it ought to have been. A subdued cry spread up and down, from mouth to mouth, among his foes, a large body of whom appeared instantly on the ridge, from the hollow

where they had collected unobserved. One of them cried,—

“Hand over your pistol, lad, and sit down quietly where you were, and we will do you no harm.”

To do anything but what his officer had desired was, however, too confusing to Nicholas's faculties to be borne. The order to fire as soon as smugglers were perceived came upon his mind, as if spoken at the moment in the Lieutenant's own voice, and saved him the trouble of all internal conflict. He fired, and was instantly fired upon in turn, and wounded. As he staggered far enough back from the verge to fall on safe ground, he had the consolation of hearing (after the cloud of flapping sea-birds had taken themselves far out to sea) a repetition of shots along the cliffs on either hand, fainter and shorter in the increasing distance. The ominous roll of the drum,—the most warlike signal of the smugglers,—was next heard from the hollow to the right, and more sea-birds fluttered and screamed. Silence was gone; the alarm was given; and poor Nicholas need not resist the welcome faintness that stretched him on the grass.

The smugglers, annoyed by former repeated failures in their attempts to intimidate or gain over the Preventive watch, were now exasperated by Nicholas's unflinching discharge of his duty; and they determined to make an example of him, even in the midst of their preparations to resist the force which they knew to be on the way to attack them. The first necessary precaution was to range the batmen who had been collected by the sound of the drum, in two rows, from the vessel to the foot of the cliff, and again from the verge of the cliffs to where the carts were stationed, surrounded with guards. This being done, their pieces loaded, and their bludgeons shouldered, a small party was detached to take possession of the wounded man. On raising him, it was found that he was not dead, and that it was by no means certain that his wounds were mortal. When he recovered his senses, he felt himself lifted from the ground by a rope tied round his middle, and immediately after was being lowered over the edge of the precipice, carefully protected from being dashed against the face of the cliff by the men who stood at regular distances down the track, and who *handed* him from one to the other till he reach-

ed the bottom, where two stout men received him, and supported him on either side to a little distance along the shingle.

"What are you going to do with me?" he faintly asked; but they made no answer.

"For God's sake spare my life!"

"Too late for that, lad," replied one.

"No, not too late," said Nicholas, with renewed hope. "I don't think you have killed me. I shall get well, if you will let me go."

"Too late, lad. You should not have fired."

"You are going to murder me then," groaned the victim, sinking down upon a large stone where he had often leaned before, it being the one from which he was wont to look out to sea. "I did not expect it of you, for your people have always behaved very well to me. Everybody has been kind to me," he continued, his dying thoughts getting into the train which the spot suggested. "But, if you will do me one more kindness, do, some of you, tell the lady at the station why I could not come as she bade me. 'Come within the hour,' says she——"

He stopped short on hearing two pistols cocked successively. No duty to be done under orders being immediately present to his



mind, a paroxysm of terror seized him. He implored mercy for his mother's sake, and, with the words upon his lips, sank dead before the balls were lodged in his body as in a mark.

The proceeding was witnessed by some of his comrades, and by his officer, from the top of the cliff; and fierce were the cries and numerous were the shots which followed the murderous party, as they quickly took up the body, and fell back among the crowd of smugglers within the deep shadow where they could no longer be distinguished.

The party being three hundred strong, any resistance which the Preventive Force could offer was of little avail to check their proceedings, as long as they were disposed to carry them on. They persevered for some time in landing, hoisting up, and carting away their tubs, the batmen keeping line, and frequently firing, while the carriers passed between with their burdens. At length, a shot from one of the guard, which took more effect than was expected, seemed to occasion some change in their plans. They drew in their apparatus, ascended the track in order, bearing with them the bodies *of their slain or wounded companions*, and form-

ed round the carts, in order to proceed up the country, deserting a portion of the cargo which was left upon the shore. The vessel, meanwhile, hoisted sail, and wore round to stand out to sea.

"Can you see how many are killed or disabled?" inquired the Lieutenant of one of his men. "What is this they are hauling along?"

"Two bodies, sir; whether dead or not, I can't say."

"Not poor Nicholas's for one, I suppose."

"No, sir; they have both their faces blacked, I see."

"We must get Christian burial for Nicholas, if it be too late to save him," said the Lieutenant to his men, who were boiling with rage at the fate of their comrade.

"They have pitched him into the sea, no doubt, sir, unless they have happened to leave him on the beach as a mockery."

The procession passed with their load, like a funeral train; and to stop them would only have occasioned the loss of more lives. There were no stragglers to be cut off, for they kept their corps as compact as if they had been drilled into the service, and practised in an enemy's country. It was, in fact, so. They had been train-

ed to regular defiance of laws which they had never heard spoken of but in terms of hatred ; and whenever the agents of government were around their steps, they felt themselves in the midst of enemies.

When the smugglers had proceeded so far inland as to be out of danger, they made a halt, and gave three cheers,—an exasperating sound to the baffled guard.

“ Let them cheer ! ” cried the Lieutenant, “ our turn will come next. Down to the beach, my lads, before the tide carries off what belongs to you there. If any of you can find tracks of blood, it may not be too late for poor Nicholas, after all. Down to the beach, and seize whatever you can find.”

He remained for a few moments on the steep, ranging the horizon with his glass, internally cursing the rapid progress that the lugger (which few but Nicholas would have taken for a sloop, however deep the shadow) was making in her escape.

“ The cutter always contrives to be just in the wrong place,” thought he, “ or to arrive too late when called. She will come, as she *did* before, full sail, as soon as the smuggler *has* got out of sight, and changed her course.”

On joining his men, he found they had partly recovered their spirits, amidst the booty which lay before their eyes. Some few had given their first attention to searching for the body of their comrade, but the greater number were insisting on the necessity of removing the seizure to the Custom-house, before the tide should have risen any higher. It was already washing up so as to efface any marks of blood which might have remained on the shingle; and it seemed most probable, in the absence of any clue, that the body of Nicholas was being dashed in the surf which sent its spray among those who defied its advances to the last, before they mounted once more upon the down. They were obliged to leave a few tubs floating, after they had secured the goods which it was most important to keep dry. If these kegs could hold together amidst the dashing of the waves, they would be recoverable in the morning from the sea, as the law forbade all floating tubs to be picked up by anybody but the Coast Guard, and the watch on the shore could keep an eye on the observance of the law, for the short time that would be necessary.

“Brady, post off to the station-house, and let

- the ladies know we are all safe but one. Stay!
- You will not thank me for sending you away from your booty; and, besides, they will not believe you. I must go myself. Halt a minute, my lads."

The officer directed his steps to the gleam which shone out through the curtain of Matilda's window. Though he found her voiceless, and his mother and sister in a state of restless terror, he could not stay to revive them. The firing had seemed to them so fearful that they would scarcely credit the testimony of their own eyes that the Lieutenant was safe, or his assurance that only one life had been lost on the side of the Preventive Force. He did not say whose life that was, for he knew that there was not a man under his command whom his wife would miss more than poor Nicholas. This painful communication he left to the morning. With an assurance that the enemy had all marched off, and that no dangerous duty remained, the officer entreated his family to go to rest. It was very probable that he might not come home till daylight, and it would now be folly to waste any more anxiety upon him.

*Elizabeth* thought it really would be very fool-

ish, though she declared she did not expect to sleep a wink for a month to come. She began her preparations, however, by putting up her work with alacrity, and lighting her mother to her bedroom. Matilda went also to hers, but not to remain. As soon as all was quiet, she stole down to the fire-side, laid wood upon the embers, put out her light, and sat down, preferring a further watch to broken dreams. The cracking of the fuel and the ticking of the time-piece composed her agitated thoughts; but, instead of cheerfulness, a deep melancholy succeeded to the internal tumult of so many hours—a melancholy which grew with that it fed on.

Matilda had not hitherto been given to deep thought, or strong feeling, for any one but her husband; but the new influences of circumstance, of late suspense and fear, of the hour, and of her present social position,—all combined to stimulate her to higher reflection than, as a light-hearted girl, she had been wont to encourage. She would fain have known which of the men had fallen,—what home was to be made desolate by the tidings that must soon be on their way. Were they to stun the young wife who, like herself, had—O, no! It was

---

too dreadful to think of! Were they to smite the matron, who, in her Irish cabin, daily told the little ones around her knee tales of the brave and tender father who was to come back and caress them one day? Were they to wither the aged parent, who prayed for his roving son, and looked for the return of the prodigal before he died; or the band of young kindred who watched with longing the glory of their elder brother, and would be struck dumb at this ignoble close of his envied service? Whoever it was, a life was gone! And how? Men of the same country, members of the same social state, had been made enemies by arbitrary laws. They had been trained to deceive and to defy one another when they should have wrought, side by side, to nourish life instead of to destroy it,—to strengthen peace instead of inflicting woe. He who made the human heart to yearn at the voice of kindness, and to leap up at the tone of joy, thereby rebukes the system which gives birth to mutual curses, and flings sorrows into many homes;—He who gradually discloses to the roused human ear the music of His name, does it for other purposes than to have it taken upon human lips in *mockery* as a pass-word to the meanest frauds;

—He who made yon glittering sea a broad path by which his children might pass to and fro, so that the full may bear bread to the hungry, and the skilful send clothing to the naked, must pity the perverseness by which such mutual aid is declined, or yielded only at the expense of crime —artificial crime, which brings on natural, as its sure consequence ;—He who scatters his bounties over the earth with impartial hand, his snow and sunshine, his fruits and gems ;—He who lets loose his herds on the plains of the tropics and calls the fishy tribes into the depths of Polar seas ;—He who breathes upon the corn-fields, and they wave ; who whispers among the pine-forests of the North, and they bow before him, —thus works that men may impart and enjoy ; and yet man will not impart, and forbids his fellow-man to enjoy ;—He who in a still small voice says to the Hindoo beneath the palm-tree, “ Get thee a home ;” who visits the broken sleep of the toil-worn artizan to bid him get food and rest ; who comes in the chill wind to the shivering Boor to warn him to provide apparel ; who scares the crouching Arab with thunders among the caverned rocks, and the Greenlander with tempests on the icy sea, and the African with



wild beasts in the sultry night, that out of their terror may arise mutual protection and social ease,—is daringly gainsaid by intermeddlers, who declare that one nation shall have scanty food, and another miserable clothing; and that a third must still find holes in the rocks, or a refuge in the trees, because neither wood nor iron shall be given for habitations. Shall there not come a day when the toil-worn Briton shall complain, “I was hungry, and ye gave me no food;” and the Pole, “I was naked, and ye clothed me not;” and the Syrian wanderer, “I was houseless, and ye sheltered me not;” and the gem-decked hungering savage, “I was poor and miserable, and ye visited me not, nor let me enrich you in return?” When will men learn that the plan of Divine Providence indicates the scheme of human providence; that man should distribute his possessions as God scatters his gifts; that, as man is created for kindness and for social ease, he should be governed so as to secure them; that, as all interests naturally harmonize under a law of impartial love, it is an impiety to institute a law of *partiality*, by which interests are arbitrarily *opposed*? When will men learn that it should be

with their wrought as with their natural wealth,—that, as the air of heaven penetrates into all hidden places, and nourishes the life of every breathing thing, all the elements of human comfort should expand till they have reached and refreshed each partaker of human life; that as the seeds of vegetation are borne here and there by gales, and dropped by birds upon ridges and into hollows, the means of enjoyment should be conveyed to places lofty or lowly in the social scale, whence the winged messengers may return over the deep with an equal recompense? When will governments learn that they are responsible for every life which is sacrificed through a legislation of partiality; whether it be of a servant of its own, murdered by rebellious hands, or of a half-nourished babe dying on its sickly mother's knee, or of a spirit-broken merchant, or of a worn-out artizan? When will the people learn that, instead of acquiescing in the imposition of oaths which they mean to break, of a watch which they permit to be insulted and slaughtered, of a law which they bring up their children to despise and to defy, they should demand with one voice that freedom in the disposal of the fruits of their toil, upon which mutual

interest is a sufficient check, while it proves a more unfailing stimulus than any arbitrary encouragement given to one application of industry at the expense of all others? When shall we leave the natural laws which guide human efforts as they guide the stars in their courses to work, without attempting to mend them by our bungling art? When shall man cease to charge upon Providence evils of his own devising, and pray for deliverance from the crimes he himself has invented, and from the miseries which follow in their train? We implore that there may be no murder, and put firelocks into the hands of our smugglers. We profess our piety, and hold the Bible to unhallowed lips in our custom-houses. We say "Avaunt!" to all that is infernal when we bring our children to the font, and straightway educate them to devilish subtlety and hatred. We weekly celebrate our love for our whole race, and yet daily keep back a portion of the universal inheritance of man. O, when will man come in singleness of heart before his Maker, and look abroad upon His works in the light of His countenance!

Matilda's eyes were shining tearful in the *fire-light* when her husband entered.

"Hey! tears, my love? I saw no tears when there was more cause,—two hours ago."

"I had no time for them then," said Matilda, brushing them away.

"And why now? Do you dread more such nights, or are you worn out, or——"

"No, no; it was not for myself. It was shame.—O, I am so ashamed!"

"Of me, love? Do not you like my duty? or, do I not perform it well?"

"O, no, no. I am so ashamed at the whole world, and especially at our own nation, which thinks itself so Christian. Here we send one another out man-hunting. We make a crime, tempt a man into it, and punish him for it. Is this Christian?"

"It would be a disgrace to paganism."

"We are proud of being made in God's image, and we take pains to make human governments the reverse of the Divine. How dare we ask a blessing upon them?"

"Come, come, my good girl, you must think of something more cheerful. The hearing of a life being lost has been too much for you. You never were so near the scene of a murder before, I dare say."

"Never," replied Matilda, with quivering lips.

"It will not affect you so much again. You will become more used to the circumstances of such a situation as ours. You will feel this sort of adventure less painfully henceforward."

"But I do not wish that," was all that Matilda chose to say, lest her sorrow should be charged upon discontent with her individual lot. She looked out once more upon the sea, darkening as the moon went down, and satisfied herself that the time would come for which she had been inquiring,—when man would look above and around him, and learn of Providence.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### HEAR THE NEWS.

ALL was bustle about the nearest Custom-house when the seized vessel and goods were expected to arrive the next morning. The magistracy in the neighbourhood were also busy, for there seemed to be no end to the offences against the

law which had arisen out of the adventure of the preceding night.

The first steps taken were towards the discovery of the murderer of Nicholas; and, for this purpose, application was made to government for aid, in the shape both of police-officers and of an offer of reward for the disclosure of the murderers. Little was hoped from the latter proceeding, as the smugglers were known to yield powerful protection to each other, and to be united by a bond of honour as strongly in each other's defence as against the law. If Nicholas's murderers were known to every dweller along the coast, from Portsmouth to the North Foreland, there was little probability that any one would step forward to name or lay hands on them. But, the little that government could do, — pry about and offer bribes, was done; and, whether or not the guilty persons might tremble or flee, everybody else laughed.

One of the gipsy band was brought up before two justices of the peace on violent suspicion of having, after eight in the evening, and before six in the morning, made, aided, or assisted in making, or been present at making, a signal, by means of light, fire, flash, blaze, signal by smoke,

and so forth, through all the offences described in the appropriate clause of that most singular statute ordained for the prevention of smuggling. No proof could be brought, though the truth of the charge was generally believed, and the gipsies thereby became more popular than ever. They were dismissed, and every body laughed.

A boy was brought up, on a charge of trespass, by a farmer, who complained that his fenced land had been entered and trampled, and his well and bucket made use of without leave. The boy pleaded that he had entered for the purpose of putting out a fire which he suspected to be intended for a signal to smugglers. The justices referred to the statute, found that "it shall be lawful," &c., to commit this kind of trespass, and that the boy had only 'done his duty. And now, every body frowned.

A woman who had been caught standing near a tub of the spirits which had been seized, which tub was staved, was brought up on the charge of having staved the same. The penalty was so heavy as to tempt to a vast deal of false swearing on her behalf, by dint of which she escaped ; and *her friends* and neighbours laughed again. She *was not the less* glad of this issue that, being a

poor person, she would have been supported while in prison by a daily allowance drawn from the pockets of the nation.

A crew of fishermen were summoned to show cause why they should not, according to law, pay the treble value of a floating keg of gin, which, having bumped against their boat at sea, they had stretched out their hands to appropriate. There was no use in denying the act, as it had been witnessed by two keen eyes through unimpeachable glasses, from a headland. All that the fishermen could do was to swear that they only meant to deliver over the spirits to the Custom-house officers, and were prevented from doing so by being arrested immediately on landing. The magistrates considered this a very doubtful case ; and, having before their eyes the fear of the collective power of their smuggling neighbours, gave their decision in favour of the fishermen ; whereat the informers were indignant, and the folks in waiting exulted.

All parties had by this time had enough of this ceremony ; but the justices agreed in assuring the Lieutenant, that if they chose to look strictly into the proceedings of their neighbours and to inflict all the punishments ordained in the



statute for all the modes of offence specified therein, they might be constantly occupied from morning till night; the gaols would be filled; there would be a distraint for penalties in almost every cottage, and offenders would be nearly as common as persons who stood above five feet in their shoes. They entertained him with a sight of the entire statute, as he was not acquainted with the whole; and all thought it perfectly consistent with their exemplary loyalty to decide that it was truly an extraordinary specimen of legislation. The justices could no more boast of the achievements of their authority in putting down smuggling than the officer of his efficiency in preventing it. All shook their heads, complimented each other's exertions, and desponded about the availableness of their own.

"What is to be done?" was the commonplace query which ensued.

"Why, you see," said one of the justices, "the prohibiting a commodity does not take away the taste for it; and if you impose a high duty, you only excite people to evade it, and to calculate the average rate of the risk of detection. That being done, there will always be

abundance of speculators found to make the venture, and no lack of customers to bid them God speed."

"Then there are two ways of demolishing the practice,—lowering the duties, so as to remove the temptation to smuggling; and increasing the difficulty of carrying on a contraband trade."

"I should say there is but one," replied the first speaker. "Difficulties have been multiplied till we who have to administer the law groan under them, and smuggling is still on the increase."

"What is government about all the time?" asked the Lieutenant. "They must know this, and yet they let their own power be mocked, and the interests of our manufacturers and commercial men be sacrificed."

"Of our manufacturers, but not necessarily of all our commercial men. Contraband trade is a fine thing for certain shopkeepers; and you might hear some curious stories below there," (nodding towards the Custom-house,) "about certain methods of obtaining drawbacks, and then re-landing the goods by the help of our night-working neighbours. However, govern-

ment is getting a glimpse of the true state of the case, as we shall soon see."

"Because," observed the other magistrate, "government is beginning to look to the right quarter for information. It is nonsense to consult collectors of the revenue, and persons in their interest and of their way of thinking, about the best method of rendering taxes effectual. The only way is to contemplate the interests of the tax payers. This done, it is easily seen that there is not much wisdom in a system, the enforcement alone of which costs the country many hundred thousand pounds a year."

"And which is not enforced, after all, and never can be. No, no; the government sees now that the only way is to lower the duties down to the point which makes contraband trading a speculation not worth attempting."

"What makes you suppose that government views the matter in this light?"

"It is said, and confidently believed in London, that government has taken into consideration this petition from the principal silk-manufacturers in and about London."

The Lieutenant read the petition in the newspaper, of recent date, now handed to him.

“Hum. ‘This important manufacture, though recently considerably extended,’—aye, so it ought to be, from the increasing number of wearers of silk,—‘is still depressed below its natural level’—they are tired of Spitalfields subscriptions, I suppose, and of living among starving weavers, who throw the blame of their starvation on their masters ;—‘by laws which prevent it from attaining that degree of prosperity which, under more favourable circumstances, it would acquire.’—Well! what thinks the House of this petition?”

“That will be seen when government speaks upon it. It is thought that the prohibition of foreign silks will be removed, and a moderate duty substituted. If so, it will be an important experiment.”

“I rather think,” observed the other magistrate, “that the fault will soon be found to be neither in the undue mildness of the law, nor in our way of administering it,—of both which the customs and excise officers are for ever complaining. I believe my friend here and I shall have little less reason to bless the change than these petitioning manufacturers.”

“There will be enough left for me to do,”

observed the Lieutenant, "if, as I suppose, they will leave as they are the duties on articles not produced at home. Many a cargo of gin and tobacco will yet be landed in my day. Meanwhile, I must go and see the unpacking at the Custom-house. I hope I shall not be tempted to smuggle within those very walls, on my wife's account."

When the officer arrived at the Custom-house, he found the Collector and Comptroller invested with all the dignity of active office, and the members of the Coast Guard who were there to claim their share of booty, watching with eagerness for the unpacking of a large store of that beloved weed which was wont to "cheer but not inebriate" them on their watch. A few inquisitive neighbours were peeping in from window and door, and Mr. Pim, admitted through favour, from his son being the Collector's clerk, paced up and down, his countenance exhibiting a strange alternation of mirth and vexation. He could not help enjoying the fun of people eluding, and baffling, and thwarting one another; such fun being one chief inducement to him to connect himself as he had done with contraband *traders*; but it was a serious vexation to see

---

some of his property,—goods on whose safe arrival he had staked the earnings of his irksome school-hours,—thus about to fall into the hands of those who had paid no such dolorous price for them.

Somebody wondered that, as the smugglers had taken time to carry away so considerable a portion of their cargo, a large package of tobacco should have been left behind; tobacco being an exceedingly valuable article of contraband trade, from the difference between its original cost and its price when charged with the duty. If smugglers paid threepence a pound for their article, and sold it at half-a-crown, it must repay their risks better than most articles which they could import. One of the guard believed he had seen numerous packages of tobacco on the people's shoulders, as they passed to the carts, and supposed that the quantity before them formed a very small portion of what had been landed.

"Most likely," observed the Collector. "There is more tobacco landed than there is of any thing else, except brandy and geneva. It is high time government was bestirring itself to put down the smuggling of tobacco. Do you

know, sir," (to the Lieutenant,) "these fellows supply a fourth part of the tobacco that is consumed in England?"

"That is nothing to what they do in Ireland," observed Brady. "There were seventy vessels in one year landing tobacco between Waterford and Londonderry."

"Yes; the Irish are incorrigible," replied the Collector; "They smuggle three-fourths of the tobacco they use."

The Lieutenant doubted whether they were incorrigible. Neither the Irish, nor any body else, would think of smuggling unless they were tempted to it. If the duty, now three shillings per pound, were reduced to one shilling, smuggling tobacco would not answer; the sinning three-fourths would get their tobacco honestly, and government would be the gainer. The same advantage would arise in England from the reduction of the duty; as, in addition to the practice of smuggling being superseded, the consumption of the article would materially increase, as is always the case on the reduction of a tax. With every augmentation of the duty from eight-pence per pound to three shillings, there had *been* a failure of consumption at the same time

with an increase of contraband trade ; so that the revenue had suffered doubly, and to an extent far beyond its gains from the heightening of the duty.

“ What have we got here ? ” cried Pim as a gay-coloured article was drawn out from among the packages.

“ Flags ! Aye ; these were clever fellows, and knew their business, you see. Here are pretty imitations of navy flags, and a fine variety. British, Dutch, French ! They knew what they were about,—those fellows.”

“ So do you, it seems, Mr. Pim,” observed the Collector. “ You are as wonderfully learned in flags as if you had taken a few trips to sea yourself.”

“ I have lived on this coast for many a year, and seen most of the flags that wave on these seas,” replied Pim. “ But since these flags are but poor booty, it is a pity your men cannot catch those that hoisted them, and so get a share of the fine.”

“ Suppose you put them on the right scent, Mr. Pim. I fancy you could, if you chose.”

Mr. Pim disclaimed, with all the gravity which his son’s presence could impose. A parcel of



bandanas next appeared, and as the familiar red spotted with white appeared, a smile went round the circle of those who anticipated a share of the seizure.

“Ho, ho ! I suspect I know who these belong to,” observed the Collector. “There is a gentleman now not far off on this coast who could tell us all about them, I rather think. He has been sent for from London, under suspicion of certain tricks about the drawback on the exportation of silks. His shop is supplied very prettily by our smugglers, and his connexion with them is supposed to be the inducement to him to make large purchases at the India sales. I have no doubt he is one of those who buy bandanas at four shillings a piece, and sell them at eight shillings, when they have had a trip to Ostend or Guernsey. I have a good mind to send for him.”

“This is the last sort of commodities I should think it can be pleasant to you Custom-house folks to declare forfeited,” observed Pim. “Your consciences must twinge you a little here, I should think. I don’t doubt your tobacco and your brandy being duty-paid, and all *proper* ; but when paying duty will not do, you

will offend, just like those who are not government servants, rather than go without what you have a mind to. I'll lay any wager now——"

"Hold your impertinent tongue, sir," cried the Collector.

Mr. Pim obeyed, taking leave to use his hands instead. He stepped behind the Collector, and quietly picked his pocket of a bandana: he did the same to the Comptroller; and afterwards to all the rest, though the land-waiter whisked away his coat-tail, and the tide-waiter got into a corner. The only one who escaped was the clerk (Pim's own son), and he only because his having one round his neck made the process unnecessary. A goodly display of bandanas,—real Indian,—now graced the counter, and everybody joined in Pim's hearty laugh.

"Now," said he, "if you summon Breme on the suspicion of this property being his——"

"So you know who the gentleman was that I was speaking of," cried the Collector. "Very well. Perhaps you can tell us a little news of this next package."

And forthwith was opened to view a beautiful assortment of figured silks, of various colours, but all of one pattern. Mr. Pim gravely shook *his head over them.*

“If you know nothing of those, I do,” said Brady, taking out his tobacco-box, and producing therefrom the snip of silk which had been extracted from Elizabeth’s glove. “’Tis the same article, you see ; and the Lieutenant here declares ’tis English.”

“And so it is, and so are these,” declared the Collector. “The French would be ashamed of such a fabric as this, at the price marked, though they might own the figure ; which must be imitated from theirs, I fancy. We had better send for Mr. Breme, and let the other Custom-house know of this seizure. I suspect it will throw some more light on the tricks about the drawback.”

Mr. Breme was found to be nearer at hand than had been supposed. Having failed in his speculation, through two unfortunate seizures of contraband cargoes, he had cut but a poor figure at the larger Custom-house, where he had just been examined, and found it necessary to consult with his Brighton brother as to the means of getting the threatened fine mitigated, or of paying it, if no mercy could be obtained. He was proceeding along the coast to Brighton, *when Pim*, who was aware of his movements,

met him, and told him of the adventures which had taken place at Beachy Head.

What was to be done ? Should he slip past to Brighton quietly, at the risk of being brought back in a rather disagreeable way, or should he make his appearance at once, and brave the circumstances, before more evidence should be gathered against him from distant quarters ? The latter measure was decided upon ; and Breme, after changing his directions to the post-boy, leaned back in his chaise to ruminate, in anything but a merry mood, on the losses which he had sustained, was sustaining, and must expect still further to sustain.

Breme had lately become a merchant in a small way, as well as a shopkeeper. He had followed the example of many of his brethren in trade, in venturing upon a proceeding of some risk, in hopes that large profits would cover the loss of the occasional failures which he had to expect. He had employed his Spitalfields neighbour to manufacture a fabric in imitation of French silk, and had exported the produce as English, receiving at the Custom-house the drawback granted to such exportation. This drawback was the remission, or paying back, of

the duties on the article to be exported; such remission being necessary to enable the exporter to sell his commodity in the foreign market on equal terms with the foreign manufacturers, who were less burdened with taxes. Breme claimed and received this drawback, he and his agents swearing, in due form, according to the statute, that the goods were really for sale abroad, and should not be relanded. The oath was considered merely as a necessary form; and Breme had no notion of selling his goods in a foreign market at a lower price than would be given for them in England, under the supposition that they were French. Back they came, therefore; and the government, which had paid the drawback, besides having thereby made a very pretty present to Mr. Breme, saw an addition made to the stock of the already overstocked market at home, while the weavers of silk were starving, and it was charitably contributing to frequent subscriptions for their relief. Mr. Breme was now, however, a loser in his turn, his beautiful goods being clutched by the strong hand of the law. In addition to this trouble, he was suffering under the prospect of a speedy end being *put to this kind of speculation.*

He could not decide what line of defence to take till he reached the Custom-house, and heard the nature and amount of the evidence that there might be against him. When he was told that the case was to be followed up very diligently, and exposed as a warning ; that the silks were known to be of the same kind as those for which he had had to answer in another place ; and that the manufacturer and weavers would be produced to swear to the origin of the whole,—he offered to make oath that he had sold the goods abroad, and that their being afterwards smuggled back again was the act of his customers, and not his own. The Collector congratulated him that, this being the case, he was not subjected to the loss which some of his friends had regretted on his account. It was, indeed, a much pleasanter thing to have sold the goods and pocketed the money than to see such a beautiful lot of goods, prepared at so much cost, and with so much labour and ingenuity, now lying a forfeit to the offended British law. With a bitter sweet smile, Mr. Breme bowed in answer to this congratulation, and changed the subject. He observed that days of comparative leisure were apparently at hand for all the gentlemen

|

he saw around him. If government should carry into other departments the changes it was about to make in the silk trade, there would be an end of many of the little affairs with which the time of the Custom-house officers was now so fully and disagreeably occupied.

What did he mean? Did he bring any new information?

Merely that government was about to remove the prohibition on the importation of foreign silks, and to substitute an *ad valorem* duty of 30 per cent.

"Bless my soul, sir! what an extraordinary thing!" cried the Collector. "You do not mean that you are sure of the fact, sir?"

Mr. Breme had it from the best authority.

"Why 'extraordinary?'" asked the Lieutenant. "The nature of our business this morning is proof enough that some change is necessary, is it not?"

"To be sure," replied Breme; "but the change should be all the other way. Do you know, sir, the market is deluged already with silk goods from the late slight mourning, and from a change of fashion since? What are we to do, sir, when the French pour in a flood of *their manufactures* upon us?"

“Our market is glutted because we can find no vent for our produce ; and I do not see how the matter could be mended by increasing the inducements of smugglers to supply us, while our weavers are starving in the next street. If the French silks are, on the average, 25 per cent. cheaper than ours, a duty of 30 per cent. will leave our manufacturers a fair chance in the competition with foreigners, and will throw the trade of the smugglers into their hands. My only doubt is, whether the duty is not too high, —whether there is not still some scope left to smuggling enterprize.”

“Your countrymen are much obliged to you, I am sure, sir,” said Breme, tartly. “I think government should know that some of its servants are ill-disposed to their duty.”

The Lieutenant dared the shopkeeper to say this again, in the midst of the witnesses of what his conduct had been on the preceding night. Breme meant only,———and so forth.

Anxious and perplexed were all the faces now, except the Lieutenant's own. His men had only a vague idea that something was to happen to take away their occupation, and to do a great mischief. Their officer bade them cheer up, and



told them that it was only to the article of silk that the reported regulations would relate.

“There is no knowing that,” sagely observed the Collector. “When they begin with such innovations, there is no telling where they will leave off. With such a fancy once in their heads, Ministers (though God forbid I should say any evil of them !) will not stop till they have ruined the revenue, and laid waste the country under the curse of an entirely free trade.”

“I dare say they will be wise enough to retain duties which all classes allow to be just ; and the levying of them will afford you quite sufficient occupation, Mr. Collector, if our trade increases, as it is likely to do under such a system,” replied the Lieutenant. “This little custom-house may no longer be wanted as a store-place for contraband goods ; but there will be all the more to do in the large ports ; and there, sir, you may find an honourable and appropriate place.”

Neither the Collector nor any of his coadjutors, however, could be consoled under the dire prospect of the total ruin of the revenue, which was the result they chose to anticipate from the measures understood to be now in contemplation. *Their only ground of hope was, that the*

British manufacturers would rise in a body to remonstrate against the sacrifice of their interests. This, however, considering that the most eminent of the body had already petitioned for the opening of the trade, offered a very slender promise of consolation.

Pim had early slipped away to spread the news of the contemplated "ruin of the coast." The tidings spread from mouth to mouth, till they filled every cottage, and reached even the recesses where the gipsies made a home. Draper and Faa came forth over the down to hear what the school-master had to tell, and returned thoughtful to the tent where Mrs. Draper was looking out for them.

"Then the winters will pass over us in a ceiled house," said she, when she had heard the news. "We must join our tribe in London from the first autumn fog till the last spring frost."

"You and yours," said one of the men, who was weaving the rush bottom of an old chair. "We men may work in the free air, though there will be stones instead of turf under our feet. Many chairs to mend in London."

"But no night-play to fill the pocket and sharpen the spirits," old Faa observed. There


was nothing in cities that he liked so well as his task of the last night,—to stand on the ridge as a watch upon the sentinel, and stoop, or hold himself erect, according as the sentinel turned his back or his face, that the lads in the furze might know when to creep forward on all-fours, and when to lie still. It was far pleasanter to see them all collected safe in the shadow of Shooter's Bottom, ready for work or fighting, whichever might befall, than to mix in the medley of bustling people in London streets, who were too busy in the lamplight to heed the stars overhead, which, indeed, it took some time to make out through such an air.

Mrs. Draper would forgive the air for the sake of the warmth and shelter; and the children would excuse everything for the sake of being seventy miles distant from Mr. Pim's school-room. The younger of the men hoped that the "ruin of the coast" might be delayed beyond another winter; that if they might no more have the pleasure of handing bales of silk ashore during unlawful hours, tubs of spirits might yet cross the surf between sunset and sunrise. -

"The 'ruin of the coast!'" cried Elizabeth, *as the words struck her ear in passing some of*

the cottages. "Dear me! has anything happened to the fish, I wonder." She soon found,—what she ought to have known before,—that fish are not always the chief concern of fishermen on the coasts of a land where trades are severally "protected." Let the fish swarm in the waters as the motes in the sunbeam, and the coast may be not the less ruined in the opinion of fishermen who grow sophisticated under a bad law.


The wives looked melancholy, as in duty bound, at the extraordinary cruelty of which the government was going to be guilty,—at the very irksome caprice by which it was endeavouring to prevent itself from being cheated, as heretofore, for the advantage of those who mocked, and occasionally murdered, its agents. The good wives thought it very strange of the government to interfere with their husbands. To set spies was bad enough; but to take away their best occupation was a thing not to be borne patiently. No wonder Ned kicked away his nets, and Jem cursed the child, and Dick left his boat, and said he should go to the parish, as his prime work at sea was taken from him. As for the children, they looked as much dismayed under the shadow of evil tidings as their moth-



ers had done in childhood, on being told that Buonaparte and his French were coming ashore to cut all their throats. As soon as they dared speak, there was many a wail of "O mammy, mammy! are they going to 'ruin the coast?'"

Elizabeth thought she would make haste to the down, and tell her sister the dismal story. Breasting the wind as hardily as Matilda herself could have done, she arrived at length at the station-house, unable, for some time, to find breath for her tale. The signs of consternation below had attracted Matilda's notice; and she, too, had dared the wind, to look for the cause through the telescope, which was her favourite companion when the Lieutenant was absent. Her smile at the news surprised Elizabeth, pleased as she was with her own prospects under the new arrangements.

"I should not have thought," she observed, "that you would care so much about the matter. It will be very pleasant, to be sure, to have as much French silk, without breaking the law, and being searched, and all that kind of thing, as we like to buy; but really, if you were to see the distress of those poor people below; the children——"



[REDACTED]

|

Am

